

The Charlotte News

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School district vies with contradictory federal orders

Scooter MacMillan
 Editor

Presidential directives followed by revocations followed by re-revocations have made it hard to know what is happening or what program is threatened next.

Two big questions amidst all the uncertainty that Champlain Valley School District Superintendent Adam Bunting is wrestling with are what to do about the school system's diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and how to respond to the threatened deportation of two Champlain Valley Union High students.

In regards to the initial directive from Vermont that came from Vermont Agency of Education Secretary Zoie Saunders on Friday, April 4, requiring each individual school system to certify, within 10 days, that it's in compliance with the president's declaration that diversity, equity and inclusion efforts were "illegal."

A few days later, after a massive outpouring of complaints from citizens across the state and a

joint letter from the Vermont Superintendents Association, the Vermont School Boards Association, the Vermont Principals Association and the Vermont-National Education Association asserting that schools should not be left alone to certify their compliance, Saunders reversed course. She has now said school systems do not need to certify individually, that the state Agency of Education would handle the certification for the whole state.

Before Saunders backtracked on the certification issue, Bunting had said the school system was trying to understand what the state and the federal government were asking for.

"We're trying to understand what exactly is the Department of Education actually asking us to certify," Bunting had said. "There's a lot of unknowns at this point."

Schools are caught between an avalanche of rocks and hard places. For example, since the passage of 1972 Civil Rights legislation's titles VI and IX, it has been illegal

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Coaching changes come to Champlain Valley Union High

Scooter MacMillan
 Editor

In the world of Champlain Valley Union High athletics, one coach has stepped down and another has stepped up.

Stan Williams, head girls soccer coach, decided to give up coaching and concentrate on teaching and family, and Frank Parisi was named head football coach, filling the vacancy created when Rahn Fleming stepped down for health reasons in January.

Williams started coaching CVU girls soccer in 1994, taking over as head coach in 2013. During his tenure at the helm, the girls soccer team compiled a record of 182 wins, nine losses and six ties. During those 12 years, the team played in 10 state title games and won eight of them.

A year ago, he said, it was determined that the girls soccer team had the most championships in the country for any team sport. It is thought that the CVU's boys and girls soccer teams together have the most championships for any sport in the state of Vermont.

Williams' history at Champlain Valley goes back quite a ways. He played soccer as a student, graduating in 1989.

His mother was a teacher, his grandfather and his uncle were both principals and superintendents in this area and his cousins were teachers.

"Education was all around me. So, of course, as a teenager and then in my early 20s, I was like, 'The last thing I'm going to do is that,'" Williams said.

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Journey of service ... from Navy waters to town leader



Above: Lane Morrison during his time as a Naval officer in Vietnam.

Left: Photo by Ron Ulmer Lane Morrison outside of the Charlotte Senior Center.

Izzy Senior
 Community News Service

If you're a resident of Charlotte, you've probably heard of Lane Morrison. He's served on the school board and the selectboard, and currently is chair of the Charlotte Senior Center board.

When he talks about his involvement in the community, he prefers to point the spotlight at others, giving them credit for success. He's quick to talk about their collective accomplishments, but reluctant to talk about himself.

People who know him are not surprised by his modesty.

"He's very self-effacing, as you found out, right?" said Jim Hyde, a friend who has worked with Morrison on various town issues.

"Lane is an incredibly rare and wonderful balance between vision and practicality," said Morrison's pastor, Rev. Kevin Goldenbogen of the Charlotte Congregational Church. "He can imagine a different future and big projects and all the steps to get there, but then he quickly rolls up his sleeves and starts to get there."

Morrison grew up in New Jersey and came to the area as an engineering student at the University of Vermont.

At 21, Morrison graduated and

began working in the defense industry with General Electric. However, he wanted more excitement than this corporate job promised.

"I didn't want to sit behind a desk, so long story short, I went to the Navy's Officer Candidate School in Rhode Island," Morrison said.

He became a U.S. Naval officer during the Vietnam War. He was deployed to the rivers of Vietnam, where he served on an amphibious landing ship tank, carrying troops, vehicles and cargo.

Morrison's friends say his drive and passion for community service has roots in his experiences as a U.S. naval officer in Vietnam.

"I think part of Lane's story is, you know, his experiences as a veteran, and you know his willingness to give and serve," Goldenbogen said.

After he left the Navy, Morrison came back to General Electric. He would travel selling weapons systems to navies around the world.

Eventually, General Electric offered him a job in the area. Other employees didn't see the appeal, but Morrison jumped on the opportunity.

"I learned how to ski when I was at UVM. I played hockey at UVM," he said. "So, when I was offered a job to come back it was kind of a no brainer."

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MORRISON

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He spent the rest of his career in the Burlington area. He didn't say a lot about his career accomplishments, but Hyde said he was very successful.

"I mean, he was incredibly accomplished as an engineer, as a manager of projects, you know, for many years before he retired," Hyde said.

Meanwhile, Morrison began to become active in the community. He served on the Charlotte School Board from 1980 to 1986. He was part of the Charlotte Selectboard from 2013 to 2019.

"He's very respectful, and he listens to what people have to say," Hyde said. "You can disagree with him, and it doesn't become a personal issue, as it does with so many people these days."

On top of town governance, Morrison is also active in his church. He currently serves as the Charlotte Congregational Church treasurer.

"I think it's hard to tell Lane's story without telling part of his faith story," Goldenbogen said. "Why he does what he does in the community, I think it starts a lot of times on Sunday mornings."

The 150-year-old church previously had structural issues with its steeple, and that's where Morrison stepped in.

"So, we had a major challenge to raise three-quarters of a million dollars to redo the roof, then the structure, and then the steeple," Morrison said.

At first, they were not able to raise enough money. Morrison had to turn to the community once again.

"Part of the challenge was to have a second request, and the community at large came to support us above and beyond members of the church, because they want this building, this church, to represent the history of Charlotte," Morrison said.



Photo courtesy Lane Morrison

The ship Lane served on for three years, the USS Tom Green County, travelling on the Mekong River.

Morrison's current passion is channeled towards his work with the senior center, whose mission is to enrich Charlotte seniors' lives and get them more involved in the community.

"We've seen a lot of people who, for different reasons, are alone, and so one of my major goals is to encourage the use of the senior center, get people involved. We have exercise and intellectual challenges, breakfasts and lunches, doing different things," Morrison said.

Morrison and the Charlotte Senior Center have been working to expand their programs to reach a larger number of seniors. They currently have about 800 members in their database.

A challenge of working with the senior center has been raising money to pay employees, fund new programs and care for the facility.

"It's hard to make a profit, because we are only able to charge folks that come to classes or pay for a meal," Morrison said.

Morrison also talks about the importance of getting seniors outside and active,

utilizing programs that are all based out of the senior center. Morrison regularly attends senior center classes, such as a yoga class.

"So, one of my goals is to get people to be active, and you know, those outside, kayaking, hiking, bird watching, and a lot of exercises," he said.

In addition to all his work with the town, Morrison is a proud father and grandfather to four kids and 12 grandchildren.

"He goes to more hockey games than I have breakfasts. I can't believe how engaged he is with his kids and his grandchildren," Hyde said. "I think that says an awful lot about him as well."

"He's a lot of fun, too," Hyde said. "I mean, he's not just a serious guy. He's a lot of fun to be around. He has a good sense of humor. And just, just a really, really neat guy."

(Via Community News Service, a University of Vermont journalism internship, on assignment for The Charlotte News.)

FEDERAL

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to discriminate against someone, based on their sex, race, color or national origin, in programs that receive federal funding.

The way this legislation is being defined now, Bunting said, "is different in this era than it's ever been."

The question of certification is especially critical because, if a school system falsely certifies something, it is at risk under the False Claims Act.

The administration has threatened that schools that don't certify they are complying with its order to discontinue diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives could lose federal funds. Bunting estimated the CVSD receives between \$3-\$5 million a year in federal funds. He said he appreciated the state stepping up to handle certification in a unified statewide manner.

"What I think was more alarming, was that if individual school districts certified and did not match what the government's definition is of Title IV compliance, then we could be sued, not only by the federal government, but by any citizen. That goes back to the False Claims Act that started in the Civil War era," Bunting said.



Champlain Valley Union High School

File photo

Student deportation reversal

Another Gordian knot the school system is struggling to untangle is the issue of two Champlain Valley Union High students from Nicaragua facing deportation.

Bunting said the teenagers came with the families to Vermont legally under the Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans parole program, or CHNV program, which was installed during the Biden administration. It gave legal immigrants two years to find a path to legal immigration, particularly for people coming from unstable governments.

On March 25, Trump shut down the CHNV program, and those in the U.S. under the

program were given 30 days to leave the country or face deportation. According to the administration, immigrants here under the CHNV program have to leave by April 24. In the meantime, the two students have been diligently working to complete all their graduation requirements before they have to leave.

"We hear stories about international students or immigrant activists at elite universities facing the threat of deportation. But this isn't just happening to college students in big cities. It's happening

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To engage and inform Charlotte and nearby communities by:

- Publishing rigorous, in-depth reporting on town affairs.
- Providing a home for stories from our neighbors and friends.
- Reporting on how other towns have addressed challenges similar to our own.

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COACHES

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But funny enough, soccer led him to teaching after his plans for a job fell through a week before he graduated from Hamilton College in New York, where he played soccer.

Back home in Vermont, wondering what his next step should be, an old teacher told him about a rec soccer team in Shelburne that needed a coach. In 1993, he coached a junior varsity team in Middlebury and began substitute teaching. He found that, contrary to what he had thought, he liked it. He took courses at St. Mike's to get his teaching license.

"I got a job coaching at CVU, and then I student taught there. Then next thing I know, I got a teaching job. Now, I've been teaching there for 30 years," Williams said. "I've been around CVU soccer for 34 of my 54 years."

To coach soccer at the level that has become a tradition at Champlain Valley takes "an incredible amount of time. It's year round," he said. "I kind of finally had hit the point where I was not positive I could give all of myself to it. I figured that kids and parents deserve somebody who can be all in on all aspects."

The time you have to give to coaching is intense, he said, but he's loved every minute of it.

He's an instructional coach now, but he taught social studies and English at CVU for 26 years.

"The tradition of CVU soccer was strong when I was a player. It was strong when I took over, and hopefully, I made it a little stronger," Williams said. "And I hope whoever takes over from me makes it even better."

Although he is proud of the championships his teams won, he's even more proud of the community support for Redhawk soccer and the experience that community has built.

Although Williams lives and grew up in Shelburne, he's got deep roots in Charlotte. His father grew up here, and his great-grandfather started the Old Brick Store.

Parisi to head Redhawks

Frank Parisi is stepping up from defensive coordinator to head coach this year.

This will be his sixth year of coaching at Champlain Valley, one as JV offensive and defensive line coach, two as varsity offensive



Frank Parisi coaching during his first year as a varsity coach for CVU.

and defensive line coach and last year as defensive coordinator.

A resident of Essex Junction, he is vice president of commercial lending at EastRise Credit Union where he leads a team of seven lenders. He finds the leadership and management experience required for his job informs his coaching abilities. Both positions require well-tuned team building skills.

Parisi graduated from Rutland High in 1995 and played offensive line for four years at Sacred Heart University in Connecticut.

Offensive coordinator John Stempek also went to Rutland. Because Stempek was a few years ahead of him in high school, they didn't play high school football together, but he did play a year as a teammate of Stempek's brother.

He thinks that he and Stempek have brought a toughness to the Redhawks that Rutland is known for, but there are no divided loyalties. When the teams take the field, the coaches' allegiance is to the team.

Since he was introduced to CVU football, Parisi said, "It is where my heart is. I do not have any allegiance to any school but CVU."

This has made for some "fun in the

house" at his home. He has two younger daughters in the Essex school system and his oldest daughter graduated from Essex High. When she was still in school, she used to fuss at him: "You can't wear that red shirt in the house."

It seems clear from his laugh when he tells this story that the shirt didn't come off.

Parisi's first year as head coach may be a challenge. After last year's team had one of the most dominating years in Vermont sports history, winning the state title not just unbeaten, but unbeaten in unprecedented fashion — outscoring opponents by 400 points (462-62) for the year.

The Redhawks defeated Rutland, Parisi and Stempek's alma mater, 41-14 in the state title game.

However, this year promises to be a rebuilding year. Of the just over 40 players on last year's team, 21 graduated and they're losing some players to prep schools.

Among those who may choose the prep-school route are Orion Yates. Parisi hasn't heard final word on Yates' plans for his junior year. During his sophomore year, Yates shone for the Redhawks at quarterback and



Courtesy photos

Stan Williams hugs his daughter senior Lily Williams after the Redhawks won the state championship game this fall over South Burlington 2-0.

linebacker.

However, losing more than half the team from last year, may not be so devastating a blow for CVU. Because the team had so many blowouts last year, a lot of the younger players got a good bit of playing time, coming in when the game was out of reach of CVU's opponents.

Still, Parisi said, "We're going to have to truly evaluate each and every player in their positions this year, for the first time in a long time."



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FEDERAL

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to teenagers who live and work in our community," wrote Bunting and Emily McLean, who is president of the Champlain Valley School District employee association. "It's happening to young people who are doing everything we say we want from immigrants: integrating, contributing, showing up, learning and caring."

The students have done nothing wrong, the letter said. They are "suddenly being told they don't belong. They came to the U.S. legally and have followed the rules as expected. Still, they have been given days to leave the country or face deportation."

In a phone conversation, Bunting said these two are the only students he is aware of who

are in the Champlain Valley School District under this program, but he has heard there are at least 150 people across Vermont who are dealing with this now. Some of them sold the homes they left behind because they thought they would have time to get legal immigration status and permanent homes here.

However, it's hard to know for sure how many people may be affected by this ruling by the Trump administration. People are afraid to come forward because they're fearing retribution or deportation, he said.

He described the two as very focused students.

"I sat down with them and was just really inspired by their sense of purpose. They're doing high-level work," Bunting said. "I think about all of our seniors and how devastating it would be for them to hear, 'Actually, we're

not going to have you graduate in June. You're not going to have these celebrations that you normally have. You can't participate in the clubs and activities that you so enjoy. You need to leave right now."

After meeting with these students, Bunting said he realized: "These students are a part of our community. They are our kids, and we need to take responsibility for them, as we would any student, and what they're experiencing is wrong."

But then, another twist in this tangled situation: According to national media, U.S. District Judge Indira Talwani said last week that she intends to issue a stay on Trump's order requiring more than 500,000 Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans to leave the United States.

Do you love working with numbers? The Charlotte News is looking for a business manager.

John Quinney
Contributor

If you have a gift for working with numbers, you could really make a difference in our Charlotte community by being our business manager. Here's the opportunity:

Community newspapers like The Charlotte News are rated by the quality, extent and relevance of their editorial coverage. That's as it should be.

However, the numbers behind the stories — the business of community newspapers — is what makes or breaks the enterprise.

The Charlotte News is funded by revenue from donations, grants, advertising and subscriptions. Significant production costs include salaries, printing, postage, software and website development.

For the past few years at The Charlotte News, I was the board member who kept an eye on revenues, expenses and the newspaper's bank balance. I enjoyed the experience and loved digging into the kinds of questions that popped up:

- Are advertising revenues meeting targets set by the board?
- How do we boost charitable giving?
- Does the newspaper break even on paid subscriptions for out-of-towners?
- Are there opportunities to reduce printing costs?
- How have other community newspapers addressed these questions?
- What other business models might The Charlotte News explore?

The newspaper's board of directors is looking for someone who is intrigued by these sorts of questions, wants to contribute to the health of the enterprise and would like to help ensure its financial sustainability.

Thanks to the support of hundreds of Charlotters and dozens of local businesses, the newspaper you're reading is financially healthy at present. We want to keep it that way.

If you share this feeling, have a few hours a month available and a background in financial management and planning, please contact either myself (johnq@gmavt.net) or board chair, Bill Regan (bill@thecharlottenews.org). We'd love to talk with you to provide more information and to see if our interests align.

Letters to the Editor

Governor Scott keeping promises, a new beginning for Vermont

To the Editor:

Governor Scott's recent veto of the Budget Adjustment Act signals the end of one-sided policy-driven bills forced through the Vermont Legislature. With Vermont voters deciding last November to eliminate the Democrat-Progressive supermajority in the Vermont General Assembly, we restored the mechanism of checks and balances that ensures bills are honestly and openly discussed and evaluated for the best interest of Vermont.

Gone are the days where the supermajority-led legislature can simply override and ignore a governor who received over 71 percent of the popular vote (over 266,000 votes). Governor Scott is now doing exactly what he said he would do during the 2024 campaign — make Vermont affordable. The majority party legislators have forgotten how to cooperate and negotiate with the state executive branch and across the aisle to find common ground and the best solutions for Vermont. Overriding executive vetoes used to be easy and no discussion or compromise was necessary.

When the Legislature had a supermajority,

they didn't have to acknowledge the governor's or the minority party's ideas and thoughts, or for that matter those of the voters, into the law-making process. That is not the case today.

The balance in Montpelier has decidedly shifted to a position where compromise and cooperation are now necessary to affect solid legislation, an unfamiliar position for the General Assembly majority which no longer has veto override assurance.

I commend Governor Scott and his efforts to make Vermont affordable through financial common sense and accountability to taxpayers, an approach that continues to be foreign to many Vermont legislators.

Thank you, Governor Scott, for your continued commitment to Vermonters.

Bruce Roy
Williston

(Bruce ran unsuccessfully for Vermont Senate in 2024 in the Chittenden Southeast District.)

Historians condemn ending grants for humanities and public culture

To the Editor:

The American Historical Association condemns the evisceration of the National

Endowment for the Humanities.

On April 3, the so-called Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), using a nongovernmental microsoft.com email address, notified hundreds of recipients that grants awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities have been terminated. These grantees include state humanities councils, museums, teachers, researchers and organizations that serve the public, including the American Historical Association. Later that night, letters were sent from a DOGE microsoft.com email address notifying roughly 75 percent of NEH staff that they have been placed on administrative leave. This frontal attack on the nation's public culture is unpatriotic, anti-American and unjustified.

The National Endowment for the Humanities and the grants it administers nourish our democracy through research, education, preservation, institutional capacity building and public programming in the humanities for the benefit of the American people. These grants support work ranging from professional development workshops for teachers to the preservation of historic sites, research initiatives and a wide array of programs for politically and demographically diverse audiences. Despite these significant contributions to public culture, DOGE justifies the termination of these programs by declaring their destruction to be "an urgent priority for the administration."

The grant termination notices refer to a reallocation of funds to "a new direction in furtherance of the President's agenda." The specific reallocations remain unknown, but that agenda, as several executive orders have made clear, prioritizes narrow political ideology over historical research, historical accuracy and the actual historical experiences of Americans.

The National Endowment for the Humanities was established in 1965 by an act of Congress. The legislation affirmed that "the arts and the humanities belong to all the people of the United States." The American Historical Association recognizes that the chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities always has been a political appointment made by the president. The overall agency and its grantmaking programs, however, include a wide range of topics, perspectives and approaches. The agency was never intended to be, nor has it been, focused solely on a single president's narrow — and in this case, deeply ideological — agenda.

Under the guise of "safeguarding" the federal government, DOGE has terminated grants and diminished staffing to a level that renders it impossible for the agency to perform its mission responsibly and with integrity. These actions imperil both the education of the American public and the preservation of our history.

James Grossman
Washington, DC

(James Grossman is executive director of the American Historical Association.)

Public safety and substance use call for comprehensive approach

To the Editor:

Vermont has long been a leader in treatment for addiction and substance use, particularly through its hub-and-spoke model,

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Brush fire



Photo by Robert Caldwell

Charlotte Fire and Rescue, Hinesburg Fire, Ferrisburgh Fire and Shelburne Fire respond to an approximately 1-acre brush fire that started from a backyard fire pit on Spear Street around 5 p.m., Monday, April 7. Although though the ground is moist, growth and other fuel on top of the ground is dry this spring, said firefighters.

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which was launched nearly a decade ago to address the opioid epidemic. This approach brought treatment into the mainstream, integrating it into doctor's offices and expanding access to services through regional hubs. It made Vermont one of the top states for accessing care and significantly reduced the stigma around seeking help.

However, the landscape of the substances in use has evolved over the past 10 years. What we are seeing now is an increasingly complex drug supply in Vermont that mixes the potent opioid fentanyl with stimulants like methamphetamines and cocaine and adulterants like xylazine, leading to complex addictions and complex treatment. The tools and treatment systems we developed to address opioid addiction are no longer enough to tackle this emerging crisis.

The medication-assisted treatment model that once worked for opioids does not translate effectively to stimulant use. Not surprisingly, that creates significant gaps in care. This shifting landscape presents new challenges in reducing addiction, improving public safety and ensuring long-term recovery.

To break the cycle, we must adapt. In addition to supporting recovery efforts, we need to address the broader public safety implications tied to addiction and drug trafficking. The criminal activity associated with drug distribution, as well as the violence and disorder it breeds, disproportionately impacts the health and safety of our communities. These are not isolated issues; they are inextricably linked to the lack of comprehensive care and support for those struggling with substance use disorder and the need for further treatment options that our judicial system can offer.

One of the most pressing gaps in our system is the treatment of complex substance use, particularly in light of the rising prevalence of stimulants. Traditional medication-based treatments used for opioid addiction do not work in the same way for stimulant use. That means that people suffering from addiction to multiple substances often face longer recovery times and higher relapse rates. There are also significant gaps in how we provide treatment for people entering residential care, making it difficult to get into care at the moment when someone is ready to take that step and difficult to get back into treatment when they are relapsing.

Vermont's housing crisis is another critical issue that exacerbates these challenges. Stable housing is a fundamental pillar of recovery, yet the shortage of affordable housing makes it incredibly difficult for individuals in recovery to maintain long-term sobriety. The lack of housing units also makes it nearly impossible for recovery housing programs to expand.

The lack of stability and continuity in treatment further compounds the challenges and can play out publicly in communities across the state. Too many transitions in the residential treatment and recovery system create risks for disruption, particularly early in recovery when individuals are most vulnerable. Each time a person moves from one level of care to another, the chances of relapse increase, threatening their progress and, by extension, their potential to reintegrate into society. Vermont's

residential treatment programs need to offer a full range of treatment options, allow for longer residential treatment stays and provide better support for individuals during transitions from residential treatment programs back to home or to recovery housing options.

Substance use is a major factor in our justice system in Vermont. More than 70 percent of individuals in corrections are being treated for substance use disorder. This presents a key opportunity to address the issue, but we must go beyond offering medication-assisted treatment during incarceration. The real challenge lies in equipping individuals with the tools they need to stay sober once they are released. Without comprehensive residential treatment during incarceration and continued support through the transition back into the community, many individuals will find themselves trapped in a cycle of reoffending, which perpetuates the broader public safety issues we face.

The administration's recent proposal takes significant steps to address these gaps in care. It aims to ensure that residential treatment providers offer a full spectrum of services, equipping them to treat the evolving drug landscape effectively. Additionally, the proposal calls for stays of adequate and meaningful duration in additional high-intensity recovery housing, integrating housing, treatment and critical skills-building programs for individuals in recovery and struggling with the most complex challenges. Finally, offering residential recovery services in corrections and enhancing pre-trial supervision, this plan will help bridge the gap between incarceration and successful reintegration into communities.

Ultimately, by filling the gaps in our current system and smoothing out the transitions in care, we can improve care for those struggling with addiction and address the behaviors that disrupt the safety and health of our communities. We will see a reduction in substance-use-related crime, improved public safety and a stronger, more resilient state overall.

Healthy individuals are the foundation of healthy communities and by investing in comprehensive, integrated care, Vermonters can break free from the cycle of addiction and rebuild their lives. The time to act is now, and with the right tools and policies in place, Vermont can continue to lead the way.

Jenney Samuelson
Shelburne

(Jenney Samuelson is secretary of the Agency of Human Services.)

Spear Street reopens

Brett Yates
Contributor

More than eight months after last summer's floods, Spear Street reopened to traffic on April 6.

Last year, the remnants of Hurricane Beryl left behind a canyon on the north-south thoroughfare after Mud Hollow Brook washed out a culvert between Lime Kiln Road and Carpenter Road. A new dual culvert has replaced it.

"I wanted to thank everybody who has taken part in this, not only members of the board, past members of the board, but also all the adjoining landowners who worked hand-in-hand with us to make sure this project moved forward quickly," town administrator Nate Bareham said at the Charlotte Selectboard's meeting on April 14.

Although the closure has ended, the job isn't quite done. Contractors still need to

clean up the staging area and then, finally, to repave the road.

"We're just waiting for better weather," Bareham said. "The town will usually go out to bid for paving late April, early May, and try to get a contractor to come in and do paving work sometime in late May or June."

The delay comes with a price. While the Federal Highway Administration's Emergency Relief Program will cover the cost of all work completed by April 7 (totaling roughly \$1.1 million by Bareham's account), the town will have to chip in for expenses incurred following that deadline.

Bareham couldn't yet estimate the town's likely bill, but he emphasized that the "substantive work" finished on time.

"We're not going to have to put in a ton of extra money relative to the overall project cost," he said.

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Report from the Legislature

Charlotte charter, education bill and saving democracy

Chea Waters Evans
Representative

It's a weird time in the State House. We're making all these laws and working on a budget and honestly, we don't know how much money we're going to have from the federal government with each passing day. But we're carrying on as if everything is going to be all right, because of course, it is. We'll figure it out.

I have a few things to address this week: the Charlotte town charter, the education bill, how are we going to prevent ourselves from losing democracy and an event coming up. In no particular order of importance, of course.

Around Town

Congratulations

Brynn Hutchins of Charlotte will be inducted into Triota, the women's studies honor society at the University of Vermont.

First, the charter. We passed the proposed charter on Town Meeting Day. It essentially asks the legislature to allow Charlotte to exempt ourselves from a portion of a law that was passed last year. The HOMES act was a large bill that addressed different ways in which creating housing could be made easier. One of those changes was allowing the governing bodies of municipalities — in our case, the selectboard — to make changes to land-use regulations without a townwide vote.

In years past, we had these big documents that included a pile of changes, everything from food-truck policies to changing a comma. We then voted on all of the changes as a town via Australian ballot. This change in the HOMES act removes the townwide vote requirement. Except in Charlotte, we voted that we don't want the selectboard to make those changes; we all want to make the changes. Or, at least a majority of us do.

The charter process (I know I've really gotten overly enthusiastic about Dillon's Rule here before so I won't do it again, but believe me, the passion is still here) means that the legislature has to approve any charters or charter changes. My committee, as it happens, approves all

of the charter bills that come through the House. I'm presenting the town charter bill introduction this Friday, April 18, at 1 p.m. in my committee, and then we'll take testimony in the coming weeks. If you're interested in weighing in on the record, be in touch and I'll get you on the agenda.

We passed H.454, the big education bill, out of the house last week. Sometimes we pass bills and we know nothing, or little, is going to change during its time in the Senate. Like, maybe the bill goes to summer camp and grows an inch but is basically the same when it comes back. This bill, which took a ton of work and hours of floor debate, will come back from summer camp with a whittling hobby, a tattoo done with a ballpoint pen by its bunkmate, a new hair color, and it will reject its childhood nickname. It'll still be the same camper, just really different.

The goal of this bill is to do just a couple little things like completely overhaul our education system across the state and completely overhaul the way we pay for public education. So, as you can imagine, it's not a quick fix, nor should it be. At the moment, we don't know what it will look like, but as always, whenever anyone asks for my opinion, I tell them my most important priority is the kids.

Americans — people with green cards, people who are legally allowed to be here — are being arrested in our state, or being arrested and brought to our state, because the president's administration doesn't like their politics. This should scare the bejesus out of every single one of us. If you're not a person who gets involved or tries to stay out of politics or would rather spend your spare time watching television, I urge you to, when you finish the latest season of *The White Lotus*, of course, do something. It can be little. Email me or your senators or Becca and Bernie and Peter. Call the governor and ask him to stop putting his party over our people. Or it can be bigger: Go to a protest, write an op-ed for the paper, hold an informal gathering in your yard around the firepit to talk with your neighbors and



Photo by Mike Yantachka

friends about action you can take. This is serious. No matter if you've lived here for two weeks or two generations, you're a Vermonter. We do stuff.

Finally, our Attorney General Charity Clark is joining me at the Charlotte Town Hall on April 29 at 6:30 p.m. She's going to discuss her work to protect the rule of law and Vermont's sovereignty. As of writing this, she's already filed nine lawsuits against the Trump administration, but there are surely more to come every day. It's going to be interesting and entertaining and hopeful, and I'd love to see you all there.

You can find me at cevans@leg.state.vt.us or 917-887-8231. Our state motto is Freedom and Unity, and I really think now is the time for us, no matter what our disagreements are, to see how much we all believe in both of those things.

Food Shelf News

Funding cuts and uncertainty, but community steps up

Katherine Arthaud
Contributor

Though the Charlotte Food Shelf relies heavily on donations from the Charlotte community, it also completes a large monthly order to the Vermont Foodbank for a variety of perishables and non-perishables, such as vegetables, fruit and meat, depending on what they have available. We receive a sizeable discount from the foodbank on these orders, giving us maximum bang for the buck in providing healthy nutrition for our clients. As Peggy Sharpe, president of the food shelf says, "We literally get tons of food from them."

Unfortunately, the Vermont Foodbank is not exempt from the ongoing federal funding cuts we've been hearing so much about lately. According to an article in the Burlington Free Press (Sydney P. Hakes, April 2), a dozen truckloads of food for hungry Vermonters has been canceled because of federal funding cuts. The missing truckloads of food, intended to serve people across the state over the course of the year, will affect about 80 Vermont community partners.

Local food shelves, banks and pantries say this is a particularly bad time for this to be happening. Demand has been rising in the past few years, and combined with higher prices at the grocery store, an expensive housing market and higher tariffs, we are seeing extra-high needs for supplementary food.

Even before the cancellation of the 12 food trucks, the federal government had cut a previously received grant of \$30,000 designated for the purchase

of food from local farms, resulting in reduced food availability for those who really need it and a negative impact on local economies.

The Vermont Foodbank is communicating its concerns to the state legislature in hopes that the state can do something to patch some of the holes caused by the recent federal funding cuts. While the foodbank doesn't expect the state to make up the entire shortfall, they are hoping that new policies will make it possible for Vermonters to have access to healthy, nutritious food.

Also, unsettling is the news that the U.S. Department of Agriculture is cutting \$1 billion in federal funding for schools, food banks and other food assistance programs. Without this federal funding, there will be less healthy, perishable food available to the people who use the 300 partner programs across the state.

We have called Peter Welch's office several times for more information regarding federal funding cuts and how these cuts will affect Vermonters but have not heard back.

Meanwhile, the wonderful, generous Charlotte community continues to come through with donations of money, time and produce. We could not do this without you, and we cannot thank you enough. Your gifts are so important and

much, much appreciated. Your donations go far in helping food-insecure families get the nutrition they need.

A special thank you to Charlotte Fire and Rescue personnel who contributed 144 boxes of Girl Scout cookies to the food shelf. And thank you, Mickey West and The Red Onion Café, for the scrumptious red onion pastries, and Our Lady of Mount Carmel for the donations of bags of non-perishable foods. And thank you to Christine Lobel, Jocelyn Schermerhorn, Cecily Stokes-Prindle, John Henry Siedecki, Diane Cote (in memory of Joan Braun), Katherine Arthaud, Deborah Cook, Katherine Nolan and Stephen Kiernan for your generous donations.

You are all awesome. All your help is so appreciated.

Our schedule is the second and fourth Wednesdays, 4-6 p.m., and Saturdays, 9-11 a.m., of the month, unless otherwise noted. Speaking of which, please note: The food shelf will be closed the week of

April 20 for renovations, and there will be no food distributions on Wednesday, April 23, and Saturday, April 26.

For applications for grant assistance, forms are available at the food shelf and on the website. Applicants must reside in Charlotte or North Ferrisburgh.

If you would like to donate to the Charlotte Food Shelf, you can use your PayPal account or your credit or debit card. If you prefer to donate via check, you can make checks payable to Charlotte Food Shelf and mail to: P.O. Box 83, Charlotte, VT 05445. For more information, call 802-425-2402.

A convenient way to support the food shelf is to sign up for monthly donations through PayPal, which will allow you to spread your donations out over the year.

The Charlotte Food Shelf is a nonprofit tax-exempt organization. Gifts are tax deductible within the guidelines. You can also make a contribution using the QR code or by going to <https://tinyurl.com/2e8yz2zz..>



Basin Harbor history



Photo by Scooter MacMillan

Bob Beach Jr., a member of the fourth generation of his family to manage Basin Harbor Resort, regaled attendees at the Men's Breakfast at the senior center on April 11 with stories from the history of the resort. There is a fifth generation coming on. His family has been at Basin Harbor for 139 years. Over 40 years ago, he said, he and his sister bought out the rest of the family with a loan they got with no money on a handshake deal.



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Earth Month dawns with a plethora of activities

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

Deciding that our planet deserves more than just a day, Charlotte decided last year to celebrate Earth Month rather than just Earth Day.

Although there had been a couple of events in the town's month-long planet pageant this year, the official kickoff was this past Saturday, April 5, at the library.

Burlington's arborist V.J. Comai threw out the first pitch with a talk and demonstration, with tree-trimming tools in hand, of things he might do if booked to clean up and rejuvenate trees on the town green.

Because trees are so susceptible to both diseases and parasites, he emphasized the importance of sterilizing your tools between cuts to keep from spreading them.

Some things that are named as tree diseases are actually parasites. Over his 30 years of hiking in Bolton Valley, Comai said he has noticed a significant decline in stands of native beech trees there.

This decline is due to what is called beech bark disease, but it's not a disease; it's a very small insect.

If you look closely at the bark of a beech suffering from beech bark disease, you'll see "very tiny white cotton-looking stuff on the bark, but it's actually a scale insect," Comai said. "It's a tiny, little insect that has piercing mouth parts that punctures into the bark and is sucking out the plant juices."

The cottony substance is actually coating over the insect, he said. After they feed for a number of years, a fungus moves into the wound sites. After some years of decline, eventually affected beech trees will die.

Of course, this isn't the only threat. For example, there's beech leaf disease, which also isn't actually a disease but a nematode that's feeds on leaves and skeletonizes them.

Comai doesn't think that beech leaf disease has made it to Vermont yet, but it's moving this way. It has been found in Massachusetts.

Oak wilt disease has been making its way across the Midwest, moving through stands of oak trees. This disease is transferred through root systems, where root systems have grafted together.

"It's one thing after another," he said.

Because oak wilt disease is usually found in big stands of oak trees, it's one of the reasons why arborists are recommending

planting a large diversity of trees.

"We figured the other day, we've planted a little over 2,100 new trees in Burlington in the seven years that I've been there," Comai said. "Gone are the days where we're lining the streets with one species of tree. It's all about diversity. We're planting as many species as we can get away with."

Although Charlotte is known for its heavy clay soil, the soil is nutrient rich. He recommends against using 10-10-10 fertilizer. One of those 10s refers to phosphorus. You don't want that because, as we all should know, phosphorus is an issue in our waterways.

"It ends up in the lake and causes all kinds of problems," he said. And in his experience in testing soil, he hasn't seen a phosphorus deficiency.

"Typically, I just don't fertilize trees, unless you see outward signs on the foliage," Comai said.

We are seeing more diseases and parasites attacking trees, he said. This is due to two things; one is the way that things are moving across the world, and "things are hitching a ride." The other reason is our warming climate.

Comai believes that the warming climate is having an effect on our sugar maples. He is seeing 30- to 40-year-old sugar maples that "should just be hitting their stride, that seem to be struggling."

He worries about the long-term prognosis for sugar maples.

"We're seeing pests and disease problems here that were never a problem before, because the insect might not have survived our winters, and now they are," said Comai. "And it's likely to be more in the future. So, it's daunting."

In the library after Comai's tree presentation, Charlie Nardoizzi followed with a talk on ecological gardening

Nardoizzi has worked for more than 30 years bringing expert gardening information to home gardeners through radio, television, talks, tours, on-line and in print. He hosts the award-winning "All Things Gardening" on Vermont Public Radio.

He sees ecological gardening as the next wave in gardening. Starting around World War II, a system of gardening began that he calls chemical-based, where the solution to everything in the garden was seen as chemicals in fertilizers and pesticides.



Photos by Lee Krohn

The Charlotte Land Trust was one of several organizations that were set up on the library porch for the kickoff of Earth Month.



VJ Comai illustrates how to prune a tree to help it thrive.

In the 70s and 80s we were into organic gardening. Now, he said, we are "moving into another whole realm, which is what I'm calling ecological gardening."

"I used to do garden coaching and go to people's houses and they'd say, 'Yeah, we're organic gardeners. There's our vegetable garden over there. We don't spray anything or put any chemicals on it.' But then you'd look in their shed, and they'd have weed killer for the lawn and sprays for their trees."

So, organic gardening often tends to be segmented.

In an ecological yard, you don't grow separate rows of beans, corn, peppers and a little distance away have flower beds. Instead, everything is integrated. Everything is grown together.

"And it all starts with the soil," Nardoizzi said.

Soil is a living entity, he said, not just an empty vessel of sand, silt, clay, water and air spaces "and a few earthworms here and there. There's a lot going on in the soil."

Ecological gardening protects the native fertility of soil and builds upon it by mimicking what's happening with natural systems while enhancing those systems in the process.

He said that for the last 10-20 years, we

have been really analyzing soil, and finding that soil has more than just earthworms, ground beetles and larger organisms in it. There are also lots of microbes in soil — lots and lots of microbes.

"There are over 4 billion microbes in one tablespoon of healthy soil. These are fungi, bacteria, viruses, protozoa, all kinds of microbes," Nardoizzi said. "What they're finding is that what's happening is that these microbes create networks in the soil, and these networks help move water and nutrients around from the soil to plants, and even between plants, too."

In ecological gardening, gardeners work to protect the interaction between plants and microbes.

In a forest after a big windstorm has blown down trees or after it's been clearcut, there is always something on the soil. The goal is to mimic that in the garden by putting down organic material like hay mulch, chopped leaves, grass clippings or growing plants.

"You don't want to have bare soil," he said. "No-dig gardening is not new. It's been around for generations, but it's kind of having a new wave."

No-dig gardening is very similar to no-till

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Shelburne Farms hopes ‘biochar’ eases methane emissions

Hannah Head
Community News Service

Shelburne Farms is experimenting with a charcoal-like material known as biochar in its dairy operations as part of reaching a net-zero emissions goal.

The 1,400-acre working farm and education center is primarily using biochar on the surface of its manure pits, with early indications suggesting it has reduced odors along with potentially reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Biochar is a kind of a charcoal, made from excess organic material that is often used for its ability to sequester carbon. Studies also suggest biochar can help soils retain moisture and nutrients.

“It’s considered a soil amendment, and it’s produced by heating wood in very, very hot temperatures, called pyrolysis,” explained Molly Webb, a climate action adviser for Shelburne Farms. “Therefore, the release of carbon dioxide and gases that would normally happen as biomass degrades would be captured or sequestered in the biochar.”

Shelburne Farms is home to animals including a herd of 110 milking cows, whose milk is used in the cheese-making operation on site. The biochar project, which started four years ago, is designed to help reduce methane emissions from cow manure at the sprawling property along Lake Champlain. Methane is another greenhouse gas, like carbon dioxide, that gets released into the atmosphere and contributes to global warming by trapping heat.

In Vermont, agriculture is a major source of

methane. Methane is naturally emitted from cows in a process called eructation — belching. Methane can also be observed bubbling off of the surface of manure storage lagoons.

“Methane in agriculture is biogenic,” said Alex DePillis, senior agricultural development coordinator for the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets. “It comes from plants, it can go back to plants.”

Agriculture accounts for over 16 percent of Vermont’s greenhouse gas emissions, according to the updated Vermont Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory and Forecast.

“We’re doing the mitigation, reducing greenhouse gases because we have a responsibility to do it,” said DePillis. “There’s been good work done to really think about: ‘How does this help us adapt to what is gonna happen, and how do we help nature be more resilient, and how do we help our working lands be more resilient?’”

Shelburne Farms began using biochar as part of a multiphased climate initiative to reach a 2028 net-zero emissions goal. Other initiatives included replacing gas-reliant lawnmowers with electric ones, a reforestation project aimed at increasing carbon sequestration and the creation of more educational spaces around the importance of a net-zero goal. The work around soils is an important part of the effort.

“The key thing is everyone’s getting more excited about soils. It’s part of the story of how regenerating land and soils is part of net-zero storage,” Webb said.

Biochar has several additional benefits besides potential emissions reductions. Many of the dairy farmworkers at Shelburne Farms have observed significantly less odors coming from the manure pits in which biochar was applied.

“One of my favorite things that Shelburne Farms is doing with biochar is covering their manure pit,” DePillis said. “And this has two really great effects. One, it reduces the ammonia smell, so it reduces odors from the manure pit. ... It’s a solid that’s glomming onto that ammonia gas. That’s why it reduces ammonia odor and this is really well proven.”

Most of the data Shelburne Farms has collected is largely anecdotal. Webb said that areas where biochar-rich manure had been spread, the land was often more fertile, and plants appeared to be flourishing. So far, the pilot project with biochar has not yielded conclusive data on reducing emissions at Shelburne Farms, according to Webb.

But studying its potential and sharing the experience is important to the organization’s broader vision.

“We have a net-zero goal, and we’re — I don’t want to say gunning for it — but we’re really committed to it. Part of that commitment is based on the lessons that we’ve learned on this journey and sharing those lessons,” said Holly Brough, director of communications for Shelburne Farms.

Shelburne Farms recently applied for a grant with the University of Vermont to conduct more research on the impacts of biochar. The nonprofit farm hopes to conduct more field trials, as well as host a series of activities at the property around a biochar summit, designed to connect major stakeholders within the industry.

In August 2024, the farm hosted a roundtable workshop with the Northeast Climate Hub and UVM Extension around



The dairy barn at Shelburne Farms.

Photos by Molly Walsh

what are called smart commodities in Vermont, namely biochar.

“Having the ability to share what we’re doing in a few different ways is part of the climate action goal,” Webb said. “It’s not just visibly doing net-zero at the farm, it’s also

being able to amplify that or create audiences, you know, find audiences for that that might benefit from our learning.”

(Via Community News Service, a University of Vermont journalism internship.)

EARTH MONTH

Continued from page 8

farming or lasagna gardening.

To kill grass in your garden, you put down several layers of newspaper and then cover that with mulch, grass clippings or kitchen scraps and then cover this with 4-6 inches of compost. If you layer things like this in your garden in the fall, he said, in the spring you can plant right into it because things have broken down enough that your plants will grow.

With this gardening technique, you will be mimicking what happens in nature, creating a fertile soil that still has access to the native soil, so the plant roots can get down into it.

Nardozzi recommends using a mix that is 60 percent topsoil and 40 percent compost as your top layer. He also strongly advocates for buying local compost so you will get local microbes.

With ecological gardening, the soil wins, which means the plants and the planet wins, he said.

Nardozzi used to think that plants take nutrients out of the soil, so you have to replace those nutrients because the plants wouldn’t release the nutrients until after they die. Now they realize, as the plants are growing, they’re releasing nutrients.

“It’s important to always have something growing on your soil, because the soil needs those plants as much as the plants need that soil,” Nardozzi said. “It also sets it up so that it’s less work, less maintenance for you, and you get healthier plants and healthier produce.”

Cold rain but protests persist in Shelburne, and across U.S.

Scooter MacMillan
 Editor

On Saturday, April 5, both sides of Shelburne Road were lined with around 500 protesters from Church Street to Harbor Road. A big percentage of the crowd was from Charlotte.

At a protest near the Tesla dealership in South Burlington on March 22, one had to ask two or three times to find someone from Charlotte. At the April 5 protest, every time you asked, several people immediately shouted out that they were from Charlotte.

Estimates are that more than 5 million people in 1,400 large cities and small towns across the United States turned out on April 5 to speak up against the administration's policies.

Besides Shelburne, people opposed to a myriad of President Donald Trump's directives were protesting in at least 18 other Vermont towns, including Barton, Bennington, Brandon, Brattleboro, Burlington, Chester, Hartford, Jericho, Manchester Center, Montpelier, Newport, Rutland, Saint Albans, South Burlington, South Royalton, Vergennes, Wilmington

and Winooski. According to news reports and conversations with people who were there, the protests in Burlington and Montpelier were packed.

Many expressed fear that the administration was subverting the Constitution and threatening democracy in the United States. Other concerns included worries that education is at risk; libraries are threatened; immigrants are being deported without due process; transgender rights are being attacked; national forests are being harmed; diversity, equity and inclusion efforts have been banned; women's rights are at peril; climate change is being exacerbated; Elon Musk is gutting the federal work force illegally; but the complaints are too numerous to list.

Now 50501, one of the ad hoc groups that have sprung up in response to the actions taken in the first 100 days of Trump's second administration, is calling for another day of action on this Saturday, April 19.

They are calling for 11 million people to take part this time. If that happens it would mean that 3.5 percent of the U.S. population show up.



Photos by Scooter MacMillan

Tariffs were another popular target of protesters' anger.



The rain and cold didn't seem to dampen the spirits of protesters or diminish their ire.



A good number of canine comedians wore signs with the "E" in "DOGE" crossed out.



Photo by Jeffrey Pascoe

People filled Church Street in Burlington from Main Street to its end.

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Young people leading in the arts brings hope in bleak times

Bill Schubart
Contributor

Dark times in America, even as Vermont is only a small part of the whole, our own Senator Bernie Sanders is adding disproportionate reach to our small footprint at a critical time and doing so in a voice that millions of Americans can hear.

When I zoom in from my sad country to my home state, I search for glimmers of light. Although we're not engineering a fascist state like the current federal leadership, we're facing daunting challenges in how to fund and improve our own fundamentals of democratic society:

- a quality public education infrastructure within our communities,
- a healthcare system that's accessible to Vermonters,
- a criminal justice system that delivers the constitutional right to a speedy trial and favors safe reentry over long-term incarceration,
- universal housing, nutritional security and a sustainable food system,
- managing a benign environmental impact by Vermonters on our landscape,
- a fair and equitable tax code and regulatory system that supports a common good.

Even as these fundamentals of a sound democracy are being shredded nationally by selfish little boys and girls dressed up as grownups, here in Vermont for the most part, we have many committed Vermonters trying to address these problems. We just lack visionary and courageous leadership.

So, I look for the light. I find it in the faces of young people, especially those committed to artistic endeavor.

Vermont has a plethora of artistic

opportunities for young people seeking to express themselves through the arts. The beauty of the arts is that they demand more than inspiration, they also require great skill that takes practice and commitment to achieve, skills that enable other successes in life.

We are blessed. We have the Young Writers Project (youngwritersproject.org), the Vermont Youth Orchestra (vyo.org), Young Tradition Vermont (vtfolklife.org/ytv#YTVAbout), (giv.org/summer-institutes/arts), Peter Gould's Get Thee to the Funnery (gettheetotheunnery.com), and my own personal favorite, the Youth Opera Company of Middlebury (ocmvermont.org/youth-opera). Add two and two together here and you're apt to get five. By way of example, the Vermont Youth Orchestra and the Youth Opera Company of Middlebury performed together in a Mozart mashup this past Friday at the Elley-Long Music Center in Colchester.

Young people performing grand opera says so much to me about our hopes for the future of civilization.

In December, we saw a cast of 140 young singers perform Purcell's 1680 opera "Dido and Aeneas" at the Mt. Abraham auditorium to a sold-out crowd.

The pain of what's happening to my country was briefly eclipsed by this supernova of young talent. Hope glimmered for a country that will soon be in the hands of the ascendent generation.

As we devolve from a free and fair world that understands and commits to our common good and instead uses wealth and power to bring forth an oligarchy controlled by unimaginable wealth, to see and experience the commitment to artistic rigor and beauty performed by our emerging



Photo courtesy of Youth Opera Company

The Youth Opera Company's performance of 'Dido and Aeneas' at the Mount Abraham Union High auditorium.

leaders brings me hope.

Art lifts us beyond the quotidian world of our immediate wants and desires. It asks more of us. It infuses discipline with the grace and beauty of human connection.

In a world that has come to measure self-worth in terms of consumption and ownership or subservient power, we look to the arts to better understand how we are connected beyond the smallness of ownership and control. We can see and share a vision of common good and beauty.

There has never been a better time to reach out and support artistic endeavors and to support our children and grandchildren who have committed to the beauty that surrounds us.

Options to support our young people in the perpetuation of this beautiful world are available within all the above links.

(Bill Schubart, twice former chair of the Vermont Arts Council, is an adviser to The Charlotte News.)

Community Roundup

4-H seeks teens for new outdoor recreation program

The University of Vermont Extension 4-H is launching a new program for Vermont high school students, ages 14 to 18, who love spending time in the outdoors and want to connect with other teens with similar interests.

The pilot program will be teen-led with participants making the decisions about recreational and social outings, guest speakers for online and in-person programs and community service and job skill development opportunities. It will be split into two chapters, northern and southern Vermont, and is open to all high school students, not just 4-H'ers.

Interested teens are asked to complete a survey at go.uvm.edu/outdoor-teens by May 9 to provide input and for a chance to win a hammock in a random drawing.

The survey will help gauge interest in how often participants would like to meet virtually and in-person and the types of activities they would like to see offered, such as hiking and nature walks, environmental stewardship projects, camping trips and social gatherings including picnics and game nights. However, each chapter, once established, would make these decisions based on the

members' interests.

If questions, teens in northern Vermont (Addison, Caledonia, Chittenden, Essex, Franklin, Grand Isle, Lamoille, Orleans and Washington Counties) should contact Holly Ferris at holly.ferris@uvm.edu.

Master gardener helpline now open to assist gardeners

Gardening enthusiasts and homeowners can now receive gardening and backyard composting information and guidance with the spring re-opening of the University of Vermont Extension master gardener helpline.

Operated by trained and knowledgeable extension master gardener volunteers, the helpline provides free, reliable, research-based answers to questions about home gardening, lawn care, composting, integrated pest management and more.

Interested Vermonters can contact the helpline in two ways. They can submit questions with photos of plants, insects and diseases or upload soil test reports to the online portal at go.uvm.edu/gardenhelpline.

Helpline volunteers also are available to answer calls at 802-656-5421 on Thursdays from 9 a.m. to noon through Oct. 30. Questions about plant identification, insect and disease management, soil health and other sustainable gardening practices are

all welcome. However, extension master gardener volunteers cannot provide personal site visits to home gardens.

Commercial growers of vegetables, berries, tree fruit and related crops who need assistance with identifying an insect pest or plant disease, should contact the university's plant diagnostic clinic (uvm.edu/extension/pdc). For other crop-related questions, contact the University of Vermont's extension commercial horticulture team (go.uvm.edu/hort).

The helpline is part of extension's community horticulture program that is committed to supporting local communities through science-based horticulture education and outreach. The program's extension master gardener program trains volunteers in horticultural best practices, empowering them to share knowledge and promote environmentally responsible gardening throughout the state.

Final call for applications to Winona Smith Scholarship

The deadline for applications to the League of Women Voters of Vermont Education Fund Winona Smith Scholarship is quickly approaching.

Applications (<https://bit.ly/LWVScholarshipDetails>), due on April 30 by midnight, can be completed online.

Students need to submit two essays (500 words), one on issues concerning voting rights and the other on the impact of a recent civic, national or world event. A letter of recommendation from a teacher (<https://bit.ly/LWVTeacherRec>) is also required.

Three \$2,000 scholarships will be awarded to three students who demonstrate financial need, scholastic achievement and come highly recommended by their teacher. The scholarship can be applied towards continuation of education in an accredited vocational-technical or trade school and two- or four-year college or university. Scholarship recipients will be announced on June 1.

Created in 1998 to honor the legacy of League leader Winona Smith, the scholarship is awarded annually to local high school seniors who embody the characteristics and qualities Smith displayed of civic participation and community service.

Last year, League of Women Voters scholarships were awarded to students from Essex and Winooski high schools and St. Johnsbury Academy.

Questions can be directed to scholarship coordinator Audrey Grant, lwwofvt.edfund@gmail.com.

Education

Essays and activities — ways to improve admission odds

Margo Bartsch
Contributor

Bigger isn't always better. Consider this year's class of 2029 college admissions trends: 6-percent increase in applications, 8 million applications through the Common Application and 3.9 million upcoming high school graduates, the largest and most diverse in history, as reported by CBS Evening News this March.

With colleges receiving more applications with limited spots, there are more rejections and waitlist letters. How can a high school student beat the odds to achieve a competitive advantage?

Think of the college application process as building a high school toolbox with three critical tools: standardized test scores, meaningful activities and memorable essays.

Starting with standardized test scores, many colleges have remained test optional. This has boosted the number of colleges that each student is applying to since many perceive there are less barriers for admissions. However, most schools still report average test scores.

For example, the University of Vermont, which is test-optional, touts that their current freshman class test scores are in the top 10 percent of test takers: ACT 31-34 (of 36) and SAT 670-740 (of 800). With the holistic application review process, submitting test scores can make an application more compelling for specific majors and awarding merit scholarships.

In addition, many high schools include their average test scores in their school profile. In fact, some high schools are listing specific GPA ranges with that group's average standardized test scores. For example, students earning a GPA of 3.9-4.0 are achieving an SAT of 740 in reading and English and 730 in math. This

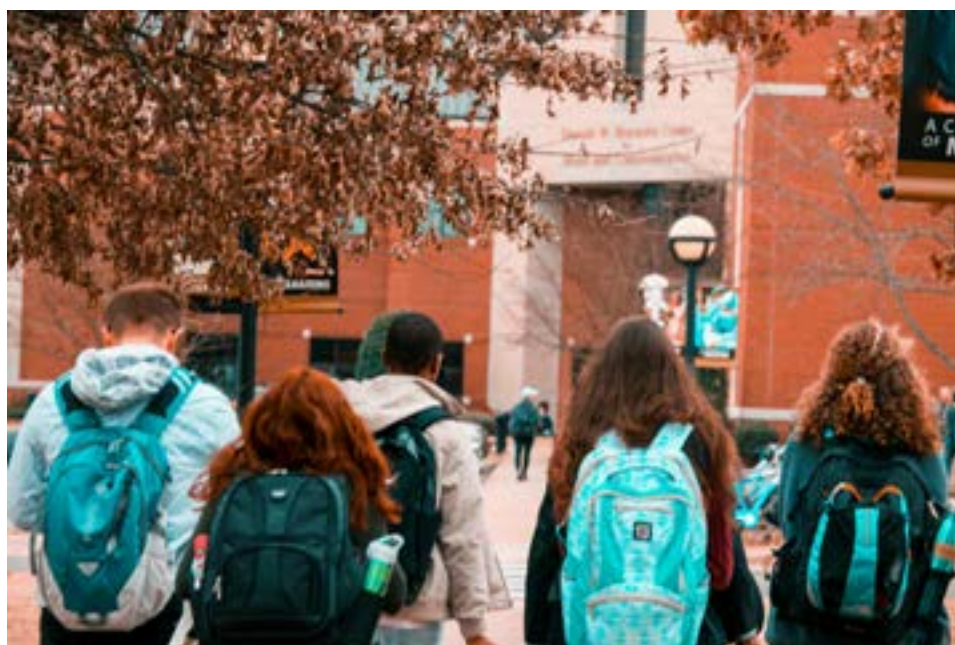


Photo by Stanley Morales of pexels

allows the college to assess grade inflation and mastery of the subject.

According to Opportunity Insights, an educational research non-profit, standardized test scores can be a better predictor of college student achievement than GPA. The report compared performance gaps of admitted students who submitted scores to those who did not.

Second, the Common Application asks students to list their top 10 activities with duration throughout high school, estimated weekly hours and leadership roles. The description is limited to 150 characters with spaces, which is roughly equal to a tweet on the X social media platform.

Activities are grouped into 27 categories (drop-down menu) including athletics, career-oriented, community service and work (paid). Collectively, activities help

to paint a picture of the student's interests, commitments and involvement. Since colleges are creating communities, a student's past experiences can serve as a bridge to their future campus engagement.

For example, if a student is interested in the environment, there are opportunities to be exposed to this field. Champlain Valley Union High offers AP environmental science. The University of Vermont summer academy includes the class Climate Change and You. Shelburne Farms offers youth farmyard educators (ages 15-17) for hands-on agriculture and animal responsibilities. There are internships at Common Roots in South Burlington to support its local sustainability mission.

Finally, the many required college essays highlight a student's academic achievements and personal activities.

Telling memorable stories reflects how life experiences shaped the student's views and interests.

The 2020 book "Who Gets In and Why: A Year Inside College Admissions" written by Jeffrey Selingo, a bestselling author and journalist, traces being embedded in the college application review process. He explains the college's point of view on how compelling essays can tilt an application into an acceptance.

Selingo describes a Davidson College review session: "In a sea of sameness that becomes the committee's deliberations after several hours, it's once again a small element in a file that turns the group's opinion. ... She scored a 32 (out of 36) on the ACT. The admissions officer says he felt the student 'didn't check all the boxes.' ... Then the reader turned to the essay. That's when I got interested. And so does the rest of the committee."

The college essays are the only opportunity for the student to share their personal voice, passionate ideas and future goals directly with the committee. Colleges want a range of backgrounds, talents and perspectives to interact within the campus community. If a student starts sounding the same as others, why would a college admit another cog in the wheel?

Throughout high school, it is important to open the tool chest early and assemble it with helpful and shiny experiences. With increasing college applicants for limited slots, many qualified students get passed over each year. The earlier a student begins identifying areas to explore, the bigger the edge compared to those who wait until the last minute.

(Margo Bartsch founded College Essay Coach, a full-service college admission business, and has been an adjunct professor in business at Champlain College and at Middlebury College.)

Students share conversations and lessons learned from books

Naomi Strada
(Summarized by Tom Scatchard)

The school assembly for the week of April 4 was led by second graders and was focused on themes of gratitude, community and seeing the good in everyday moments.

Using the picture book "Last Stop on Market Street" as inspiration, students reminded the school community that even when one wishes for more, there is so much beauty in what one already has. CJ, the story's main character, learns from his wise grandmother to notice the special things around him and appreciate the people in his community.

The assembly also previewed an exciting event that happened last week. On Tuesday, April 15, students gathered in cross-grade groups to read books that connect with the Charlotte Central School mission — taking care of ourselves, others and this place. Each group explored stories that spark important conversations about empathy, kindness and community:

- Kindergarten — "Still a Family"
- 1st & 7th grades — "Each Kindness"
- 2nd & 5th grades — "Maddie's Fridge"
- 3rd & 8th grades — "Our Little Kitchen"
- 4th & 6th grades — "Those Shoes"

At the assembly students also had fun connecting with classmates using creative greetings like pinky shakes, elbow bumps and high fives, along with questions like "What's your favorite book?" or "How many kids are in your family?"

Empty Bowls fundraiser

Champlain Valley Union High School held an evening of food, discussions and community action at the Empty Bowls fundraiser on April 10. Empty Bowls is a global grassroots movement that rallies communities around combating food insecurity. Community members were invited to participate in a soup dinner to



Courtesy photo

Students gather to read books that connect with Charlotte Central School's mission of taking care of ourselves, others and this place.

Hi! Neighbor

Breeding, training and riding award-winning Hanoverians

Phyl Newbeck
Contributor

One of the things many college students miss when they head off to school is their pets. That wasn't a problem for Eliza Rutherford. When she enrolled at the University of Vermont she brought her horse with her.

Growing up in Milton, Rutherford developed an early interest in horses and after a lot of pleading, her family allowed her to go to what was then called Contentment Farm in South Hero for summer camp when she was 10 years old.

An aunt who lived nearby had a farm horse that Rutherford helped take care of, but her first formal riding was at the summer camp. After her camp experience, Rutherford began taking weekly lessons and in her early teens, she started working at a large stable down the road and soon got Sunny, her first horse.

Initially, Rutherford wanted to do eventing, which consists of cross-country jumping, dressage and show jumping. The stable where she worked only had a jumping trainer, but Rutherford found an eventing trainer and began to work with her.

Sunny had crooked legs, which made jumping difficult, so Rutherford sold her before college and brought her new horse to UVM where she majored in animal science. Her life changed when she responded to a notice on her dorm bulletin board from a Williston woman looking for someone interested in grooming horses. The Williston farm had a dressage professional which led Rutherford to switch her equine goals.

Rutherford groomed horses at the Williston farm through college and while getting her master's in equine reproductive physiology. In 1997, the dressage professional left and Rutherford took over the boarding and training operation. Three



Photo by Michelle Morgenstern

Eliza Rutherford on one of her Hanoverians.

years later, she had her first foal and was bitten by the breeding bug.

Rutherford's second horse was a Hanoverian/Border Horse cross. "That became my heart horse," she said. "I fell in love with the breed through that horse."

Hanoverians are from the Hanover region of Germany, and they are bred mostly for dressage, show jumping and eventing.

Rutherford's Williston farm was at Taft Corners, and as big box stores began to appear around her, she knew it was time to go. It took a year to find land and another year to build a place, but she was able to move to Charlotte and establish Foxwood Hanoverian Farm in 2003.

Rutherford has competed in dressage for years. She won U.S. Dressage Federation silver and bronze medals and has twice

competed at the U.S. Dressage Finals.

"I like the mental challenge of dressage," Rutherford said. "It's teaching the horse how to use their body in a different way than they naturally would. You teach them to allow you to break down their pieces and reassemble them, so they move and carry themselves differently."

It requires a strong relationship and building trust with the horse.

While Rutherford is proud of her competitive victories, she thinks the most important thing about them is that they were on horses she bred and trained. She believes this is why she was invited to be a board member of the American Hanoverian Society. Having just finished a five-year term on a Vermont State Senate-appointed livestock welfare advisory council, she felt she had time to help out. Rutherford represented the equine world on the council which trained humane officers and reviewed proposed legislation.

Rutherford had already worked with the American Hanoverian Society for

years, presenting mares and foals for inspection. She said very few breeders ride and compete on their own horses, but she believes riding gives her more insight into the bloodline combinations so she can tweak her breeding program more precisely.

Rutherford breeds four to five foals a year, almost exclusively using frozen semen from European stallions, although she currently has one young stallion of her own. Some of her horses are sold before they are born, and others leave the farm as foals. Rutherford's Hanoverians have been purchased by buyers across the country as well as internationally, but she keeps some foals to raise that eventually become broodmares.

Rutherford continues to compete in dressage, mostly in New York and New England, although the U.S. dressage finals are generally held in Kentucky. She does so on horses she has bred and trained.

Rutherford said Europe has more of a pipeline for young breeders than the U.S., but she feels her situation is more like the European model.

"I'm a link," she said. "I breed the horses; I start them; and I train them up the levels."

CHARLOTTE CENTRAL

Continued from page 14

raise money for a local food shelf.

Senior Teryn Hytten started the fundraiser Empty Bowls at CVU last year in collaboration with ACCESS CVU. This year's recipient will be the Hinesburg Food Shelf.

It was an evening of great soup, art and discussion around combating food insecurity in our community. Included with the dinner was a handmade bowl, live music, Sisters of Anarchy Ice Cream and a silent auction.

Important music dates

Wednesday, May 14, 7 p.m., Champlain Valley School District Jazz Festival in the CVU auditorium

Wednesday, May 28, 6:30 p.m., Spring Concert in the Charlotte Central School multi-purpose room with fifth-eighth grade choruses and bands

Sunday, June 1, 5 p.m., the band and

chorus will play and sing the National Anthem at Centennial Field at the Lake Monsters game before the first pitch.

Thursday, June 5, 11:40 a.m.-12:20 p.m., jazz band performs at Discover Jazz Festival on Church Street in Burlington.

School district pre-K now enrolling

The Champlain Valley School District early education program is accepting applications for vacancies for the 2025-26 school year.

The part-time prekindergarten programs will run half-days on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. The program features a licensed program, a play-based, developmentally appropriate curriculum and nurturing, inclusive environments with bussing available within town boundaries.

Children who will be age 3 years or older by Sept. 1 and live in Charlotte, Hinesburg, Saint George, Shelburne or Williston are eligible to apply.

In the Outdoors

Hiking in April means dodging snow storms and mud

Elizabeth Bassett
Contributor

Don't put away your snow shovel yet. It's only April, and we live in Vermont.

Mark Breen has noted, on Vermont Public's Eye on the Sky, that long-term weather records confirm that Mother's Day snowstorms are not uncommon.

Even the most casual observer can notice signs of spring: peepers sing us to sleep, snowdrops and crocuses flower as daffodils bow beneath wet snow. Wood frogs are among the earliest frogs to sing their love songs. While blood antifreeze allows them to spend winter in a frozen state beneath leaf litter, they are quick to awaken to rain and warmer temperatures. They promptly migrate to water to breed.

On a mid-March visit to the vernal pool that our team monitors, we heard the quack-quack song of male wood frogs. A few weeks later, in early April, the pool brimmed with clumps of wood frog and salamander eggs. Adding to the joy of visiting a vernal pool brimming with life, hepatica and spring beauties poked from the leaf litter. No black flies yet, a perfect spring outing.

If you hear frogs and toads but don't know exactly who is singing, Vermont Center for Ecostudies offers recordings of the mating calls of Vermont frogs and toads. From the center: The sound of calling frogs is one of the most surefire and pleasant signs that warm weather is coming. Vermont is home to 11 species of frog and toad, but depending on the year, you may hear as many as eight species over the course of April, starting with the wood frog (*Lithobates sylvaticus*). Wood frogs may start in March with a call that sounds like a raspy quack. When assembled in large numbers, they can sound like a flock of ducks.

The Vermont Center for Ecostudies's April field guide features eight short recordings of frogs and toads, the second feature of this blog: vtecostudies.org/blog/field-guide-to-april-2025. The first newsletter item describes the entertaining and enchanting courtship ritual of the American woodcock or timberdoodle.

While spring optimism engulfs us and



Photos by Cathy Hunter

Left: These are salamander eggs. The white dots are infertile.

Right: Two handfuls of wood frog eggs. Wood frogs are one the earliest frogs to sing their love songs.

before the realities of woodchucks, bulb-hungry chipmunks and weeds slap us in the face, make a plan to include pollinator-friendly plants in your landscape. There's still time to order from Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District's sale of native plants. The ordering deadline is May 3 with pick-up May 10. The plants are generally small and always bare root, so they need prompt attention.

Over the decades I have populated my garden and yard with a wide range of these plants with reasonable success. My witch hazel, planted as a whip years ago, now towers over me, a happy beacon in our little woods. In late October, when leaves have dropped to the ground, it bursts forth with glorious, long-petaled yellow flowers. It's younger sib, planted more recently, is also thriving. Creating a home for these inexpensive Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District plants is an act of faith and patience, well worth the jaunt to Willison

to claim your order (<https://tinyurl.com/hhb7dt7j>).

Meanwhile, local nurseries are including more natives in their inventories.

Itching to hike now that spring is in the air?

Think again. Mud season is upon us, particularly at higher elevations. The Green Mountain Club (greenmountainclub.org) offers guidance that mostly says, don't. Roads are muddy; Camel's Hump Road in Huntington was closed in mid-March, and hiking on soft, wet trails can do serious, long-term damage.

We're fortunate to have Mt. Philo in our midst. Asphalt may not be one of your spring dreams, yet the paved road gives walkers and bikers a good workout without inflicting damage. The mount hosts spring wildflowers, and the view from the top can't be beat.

In Shelburne, the Ti Haul Road is Mt. Philo's opposite, completely flat. The gravel, multi-use trail, originally built for transport of the SS Ticonderoga to Shelburne Museum, runs from the lake at Shelburne Bay to

Harbor Road near Shelburne Community School. Parking at both ends.

The Nature Conservancy's Raven Ridge Preserve straddles the towns of Charlotte, Monkton and Hinesburg. Parking is on Rotax Road in Monkton. A spectacular vista unfolds across the Champlain Valley to the Adirondacks. The Ridge Trail, with many great views along its route, is closed through the breeding season of bobcats and ravens. There's a wetland with occasional surprises, a beaver pond and the geologically fascinating and beautiful Oven, the aforementioned viewpoint to the west and a trail that leads through mixed woodlands and first growth pioneers.

If you have not visited Raven Ridge, accessible via boardwalk and trail only as far as the beaver pond, make that your spring gift to yourself. Read about it here (<https://tinyurl.com/mu6c72kp>) and see if you can resist.

Happy spring, wherever and whenever you find it.

Verterra Nursery ramps up retail sales of native plants

Chelsea Burton
Community News Service

For the trio behind Verterra Nursery, selling trees and shrubs native to Vermont is a way to help reinvigorate deteriorating ecosystems.

The conservation-focused nursery on the corner of Baldwin and Charlotte-Hinesburg roads has made a mission of restoring natural habitats through shoring up native plants. Flora native to Vermont are adapted to the state's ecosystems, and their ability to thrive here helps the other species they've evolved alongside succeed, too. The team at Verterra has been working with a handful of agencies and nonprofits to grow and propagate those plants.

The company kicked off in 2023 when founders David Berg, Sam Gignoux and Nick Kierstead linked through Gignoux's landscaping business, Imagine Land Care.

Gignoux had crossed paths with each — Kierstead, a tree removal specialist, and Berg, an expert gardener — and the three of them found a shared interest in countering invasive plants. With their combined backgrounds in agriculture and horticulture, they created a plan to do so by getting more native plants into people's hands and yards.

"It's important because the native plants are what support our whole ecosystem. They're the food for the insects that then in turn feed the birds and other animals," said Berg, who studied environmental studies at the University of Vermont and won the Vermont Nursery and Landscape Association's young professional award a few years ago. "They're the base of our food chain."

Because they've evolved together for many years, native species have developed intricate relationships and rely on each other. Native plants provide the preferred food source, habitat and host for native birds and pollinators, as well as prevent invasive species from moving in.

Additionally, foreign plants in the natural habitat can upset the native wildlife. "Non-native plants will spread and squeeze out native plants because there is no natural predator to combat the spread," Kierstead said.

Buckthorn is one example of a popular foreign species that not only occupies the space for regional plants but also produces berries that are harmful to birds and other wildlife, he said.

The founders of Verterra said they especially want to see people grow native

species along waterways because native plants are crucial to maintaining water quality. Compared to non-natives, plants that have evolved to grow along Vermont's waters likely have root systems better suited to going deep into the soil and absorbing excess nutrients.

Invasive species throughout the watershed can lack the strong roots that prevent erosion during flood events. A lot of the plants Verterra produces end up on riverbanks; the company has worked with the Lewis Creek Association and the Addison County River Watch Collaborative, largely to mitigate flooding that has intensified over the last few years.

The trio started their nursery in part with the help of a grant from the Lake Champlain Basin Program to fund native tree nursery production. The program is federally funded and gives money to environmental organizations for opportunities that might otherwise be cost prohibitive.

"It was recommended we use our allocated Bipartisan Infrastructure Law dollars for this effort," said Lauren Jenness, an environmental analyst for the basin program. "We supported seven total grants along with Verterra — five groups based in Vermont and two in New York."

Her organization's focus on clean water, healthy ecosystems, an informed and involved public and thriving communities aligned with Verterra, she said.

So far, the nursery's main clientele has been government agencies and nonprofits doing habitat restoration work. But the Verterra crew has plans to ramp up selling directly to people with their own gardens and landscapes. The nursery has two plant sales coming up: one April 26-27 and one May 3-4, both between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. The trees and shrubs will cost around \$10-20, depending on size.

People are often driven toward pristine landscapes and collecting plants that might be beautiful but may provide no support to the local wildlife, Berg said.

"We've lost connectivity in our natural landscapes because we've developed so much, and often in developed areas, what's planted is not always native," Berg said. "If people are putting even a little bit of habitat in their yards, you can redevelop the connectivity."

(Via Community News Service, a University of Vermont journalism internship, on assignment for the Hinesburg Record.)



Photos by Annalisa Madonia

From left, Verterra founders Nick Kierstead, Sam Gignoux and David Berg.



Verterra Nursery on a recent afternoon.

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The Charlotte News

Weed's in the Garden

There's gold coming in them there gardens — briefly

Joan Weed
Contributor

The confluence of Poetry Month and spring brought to mind this Robert Frost poem:

Nothing Gold Can Stay

Nature's first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.
Her early leaf's a flower;
But only so an hour.
Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing gold can stay.

The gold that comes to mind cannot be bought nor collected. It's springtime's offering of golden blooms found in the garden. As in the poem, none last for long but serve to cheer us with hope of more color to come.

The earliest gold for me is the forsythia I clipped from my shrubs to bring in to force ahead of time. The future yellow daffodil buds are swelling not only here in my plots, but all over town. It seems that every homestead must have a cluster of them.

My Cornelian cherry tree has miniature puffballs of yellow in April but soon are gone to make way for the berries to follow. In my semi-shaded bed to the south are two kerri japonicas which will bloom closer to Mother's Day in golden puffy orbs. The shrubs are only about 3 feet tall with graceful arched stems to carry its gold.

Other bulbs which may bring early gold to the garden are tulips and allium moly. A greenish gold comes in late spring with lady's mantle, *Alchemilla mollis*.

A rare early golden flower which I am privileged to own is *Trillium luteum*. Not only are the blooms unusual, but the leaves are spotted.

More gold will appear later in the growing season in the form of daylilies, evening primroses, iris and coreopsis.

Keep a sharp eye out for the gold in the landscape as spring's offering is ephemeral.



Daffodil



Photos by Joan Weed



Kerria japonica



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Gardening

Planting planning can yield a more fruitful growing season

Benjamin Block
University of Vermont Extension

Early spring is an exciting and busy time for Vermont gardeners. Many prefer the thrill of choosing from a vast variety of seeds rather than settling for the offerings available at local nurseries.

San Marzano tomatoes, strawberry-blond calendula, dragon carrots — check, check and check. However, as your gardening experience (read: obsession) grows, so will the list of seeds you may buy. My grow list includes 27 varieties this year.

For any variety, there are vital details to track. First and foremost, should the seeds be started indoors or directly sown? If indoors, how many weeks before the average last frost date? Do the seeds need darkness or light to germinate?

You'll also want to account for the space each plant needs in a garden bed and the days until maturity for successional planting. That's a lot to keep track of, especially as you get into dozens of varieties.

Here is a simple yet effective way to manage all this information. It may not be a quick and completely effortless process, but the effort you put in now will be reaped throughout the growing season and in future years.

I track my garden using two main tools: 1) a spreadsheet with all my plant varieties and key information and 2) a grid-layout map representing all my garden beds and pots.

Starting with the plant variety list, I include important details like the indoor sowing date and the spring planting date. I color code the spreadsheet and use functions to automatically calculate the indoor sowing dates based on the average last frost date in my area, subtracting the maximum number of weeks each variety should be started beforehand.

With this setup, I can simply check this ready-made list of what to plant each week. The spreadsheet can be further customized by adding columns for any additional details you find helpful, such as plant spacing requirements.

Now onto the garden map. My garden layout consists of eight rectangular beds and several flowerpots. Each cell represents one square foot.

Within each bed, I specify what will be planted there. I color code the cells to correspond with the varieties listed in my plant variety list. If I am not sure what I will plant, I leave it blank, meaning I still need to decide what to plant there later.

While you don't have to be this detailed, I find that planning down to the square foot helps. This map ensures I know exactly

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	Name (Variety)	Date of Spring Planting	Direct Sow (Y/N)	Indoor Sow Range	Indoor sow week max	Indoor Sow Date	Area Needed
4	Amaranth (Opopeo)	5/12/2025	No	8-12 weeks before	10	3/3/2025	18 inches apart
5	Basil (Gustoso)	5/12/2025	Yes	NA			4-8 inches apart
6	Bean (Jacob's Cattle)	5/12/2025	Yes	NA			18 inches apart
7	Bleet (formanova)	5/12/2025	Yes	NA			3 inches apart
8	Cabbage (Caraflex)	4/15/2025	No Spring; Yes Summer	6-8 weeks before	8	2/18/2025	18 inches apart
9	Calendula (Strawberry Blonde)	5/12/2025	No	4-6 weeks before	6	3/31/2025	
10	Carrots (Dragon)	4/28/2025	Yes	NA			3 inches apart
11	Celosia (Flamingo Feather)	5/12/2025	Yes	3 to 4 weeks before	4	4/14/2025	
12	Chamomile	5/12/2025	No	Direct sow or 4/5 weeks before	5	4/7/2025	
13	Choy (Shanghai Green)	4/15/2025	No Spring; Yes Summer	4-6 weeks before	6	3/4/2025	6-9 inches apart
14	Garlic	Already Planted	Yes	NA			6 inches apart
15	Kale (Black Magic)	4/15/2025	No Spring; Yes Summer	4-6 weeks before	6	3/4/2025	8-12 inches apart
16	Lavendar	5/12/2025	No	10 weeks before	10	3/3/2025	12 inches apart
17	Marigold (Queen Sophie)	5/12/2025	No	3 weeks before	3	4/21/2025	18 inches apart
18	Noctiana (Jasmine scented)	5/12/2025	No	Direct sow or 6/8 weeks before	8	3/17/2025	
19	Pepper (Espelette)	5/12/2025	No	10 weeks before	10	3/3/2025	18 inches apart
20							

Images by Benjamin Block

Above: A customized spreadsheet listing plant varieties and key information, such as dates for indoor sowing and spring planting, is an effective way to organize information for planting a garden.

Right: Using a grid-layout, color-coded map showing all garden beds and pots is an efficient tool for planning a garden.



where each seedling will be transplanted.

There are many ways you can create these resources for your own garden. The simplest method is using graph paper and a pencil.

For those interested in technology-based resources, there are downloadable gardening apps (though many require a paid subscription). Personally, I prefer computer-based spreadsheets. They allow for easy edits and adjustments, and you can quickly replicate your work for future seasons.

If, like me, you have favorite varieties you plant every year, your plan may change minimally, but all the information will be right at your fingertips for next

year.

Good luck with your 2025 gardening season. I hope these tools help simplify your planning and make the process more enjoyable.

(Benjamin Block is a University of Vermont Extension master gardener intern from Montpelier.)

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Calendar

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Kids clothing drive Thru Monday, April 21

Please consider donating outgrown kids' and teens' clothes, outerwear and footwear to the Charlotte Grange's Hand-Me-Downs project. We are also accepting donations of large reusable shopping bags to use in re-distributing the clothing. There will be a large sealed bin on the porch at the Grange Hall (2858 Spear St.) for anyone who may want to drop donations off at other times during these dates. The Charlotte Hand-Me-Downs project is a program of the Charlotte Grange. Every spring and fall local families donate clothes their children have outgrown. Volunteers organize them for the Charlotte Food Shelf to give. See charlottegrange.org/events for in-person drop-off times.

'Anunnaki Tales'

Thursday, April 17, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

On Thursday, April 17, local author, Josh Brooks, will read from his book "Anunnaki Tales: Gods, Goddesses, and Kings of Ancient Sumer" at the Bixby Memorial Free Library in Vergennes. Beginning with the creation of the world and ending with the fall of Sumerian civilization, Brooks' book uses stories, illustrations and helpful interpretive notes to bring the religious literature of ancient Iraq out of the sands of time and into the world of popular myth.

Burlington color photography history Thursday, April 17, 6 p.m.

A fundraiser for the Burlington History & Culture Center at Burlington Beer Company on Flynn Avenue in Burlington will feature a talk by Hugo Martínez Cazón on Burlington's role in the development of color photography and early cinema in the former Lumière building on Flynn Avenue. Travel back to the first days of the twentieth century, when the world of the horse carriage and black-and-white da-



Courtesy photo

In 1903, the Lumiere brothers, who pioneered the development of both color photography and film, built their only non-French factory in Burlington. It now is the home of the Burlington Beer Company where there will be a fundraiser for the Burlington History & Culture Center this Thursday, April 17.

guerreotypes gave way to motion pictures and then to the daybreak of direct color photography and how Burlington played a major part in these monumental changes. Free and open to the public with complimentary hors d'oeuvres and cash bar.

Williams Woods walk

Friday, April 18, 8:30-9:30 a.m.

The Grange's Charlotte Walks this month is at Williams Woods Natural Area on Greenbush Road in Charlotte, about a mile south of the Thompson Point Road intersection. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the parking lot. The trail is a 1-mile loop through what has been called "the best remaining mature valley clayplain forest in the Champlain Valley." It also is home to many spring wonders, including vernal pools with amphibian eggs, ephemeral wild flowers and beaver activity. These walks usually last about an hour and are led at a comfortable adult-walking pace. Each month's location will be posted on the Grange events calendar: charlottegrange.org/events. Questions? Email kknh.nh@gmail.com.

Atlantic Crossing

Saturday, April 19, 12:30-2 p.m.

Atlantic Crossing showcases the rich legacy of traditional New England music at the Bixby Library in Vergennes on Saturday, April 19. From foot-stomping reels to soulful ballads, Atlantic Crossing brings Vermont's rich musical traditions to life.

Phantom Border

Wednesday, April 23, 5-6 p.m.

Vermont author Kerstin Lange considers the 870-mile-long border — now a unique nature preserve called the Green Belt — that divided her native Germany during the Cold War at the Burnham Memorial Library in Colchester. Over 1,200 rare animal and plant species found refuge in the highly militarized border strip. What was it like to live next to one of the world's most draconian borders, and what can the Green Belt tell us about ecological belonging? Register at <https://tinyurl.com/2wsx6x7h>.

'Plastic People' film

April 24, 6:30 p.m.

The Jericho Energy Task Force is celebrating Earth Week with a showing of the movie "Plastic People" at the Deborah Rawson Memorial Library on April 24 at 6:30 p.m. This award-winning feature documentary investigates our addiction to plastic and the growing threat of microplastics on human health. Plastic breaks down into microplastics that become a permanent part of the environment. Author and science journalist Ziya Tong visited scientists around the world and underwent experiments in her home, on her food and her body in a call to action to rethink our relationship with plastic. "Plastic People" was named one of the best documentaries of 2024 by Variety Magazine. Light refreshments will be served but bring your own mugs and plates. For more information email catherine.mcmains@gmail.com.

April bird monitoring walk

Saturday, April 26, 7:30-9 a.m.

Join the monthly monitoring walk to record birds at the Birds of Vermont Museum trails, forest and meadow. Bring your

own binoculars; dress for weather. Tick repellent and a water bottle are recommended. Free, but suggested donation is \$5-\$15. Register at <https://tinyurl.com/mstcnwfh> or call 802 434-2167. This walk is also a good way to celebrate National Go birding Day, which is this day (daysoftheyear.com/days/go-birding-day).

Artist reception

Saturday, April 26, 3-6 p.m.

An exhibition exploring the enduring power of myth, legend and belief through artistic interpretation of Champ, the Lake Champlain legend, runs at the Frog Hollow Craft Gallery through April 30. There will be an artist reception for "Champ: The Art of Believing" 3-6 p.m. on Saturday, April 26. Lake Champlain, a vast and mysterious body of water, has long been the subject of folklore, most notably the tale of Champ, a creature said to inhabit its depths. "Champ: The Art of Believing" invites artists to delve into the nature of belief, using Champ as a springboard for creative expression, inspired by eyewitness accounts.

Food drive for farmworkers

Thursday-Thursday, May 1-15

The Charlotte Grange is gathering non-perishable food items in support of local underserved farmworkers. Bins will be on the front porch of the Grange Hall (2848 Spear St.) during this two-week period, as well as several other places around in the area. The food drive is looking for these specific items: spaghetti (1-pound boxes), dried black beans (1-pound bags), canned black beans (16-ounce cans, preferably Goya brand), dried lentils (1-pound bags), white rice (1-pound bags), Goya yellow rice (7-ounce boxes), Maseca yellow corn flour (4-pound bags), apple or cranberry juice (64-ounce containers) and vegetable oil (48-ounce containers). Also: Goya Adobo All Purpose Seasoning, Goya Sazonador Total Seasoning, and Goya Sazon Culantro y Achiote Seasoning packets. To learn more email sallyw@aol.com or visit charlottegrange.org/events.

Vermont Book Awards

Saturday, May 3, 2025, 7 p.m.

The Vermont Book Awards will be celebrated at College Hall on the Greenway Institute Campus in Montpelier. The event will feature a keynote address from author and frequent Vermont Humanities collaborator Bill McKibben. Get tickets at <https://tinyurl.com/y8s2ubhd>.

Poetry at the Grange

Thursday, May 8, 1-2:30 p.m.

Poetry at the Grange is planned for every second Thursday, 1-2:30 p.m. at the Grange, 2848 Spear St. in Charlotte. RSVPs are encouraged but not required at abigailkilley@me.com. Each month a local poet is invited to recite several poems. Participants are also invited to recite their own poetry, read poetry of their choosing or just listen. Prizes are offered

CHARLOTTE TOWN MEETINGS AND AGENDAS

Visit charlottevt.org
for more information

Planning Commission Meeting

Thursday, April 17, 7 p.m.

Conservation Commission Meeting

Tuesday, April 22, 7 p.m.

Development Review Board Meeting

Wednesday, April 23, 7 p.m.

Regular Selectboard Meeting

Monday, April 28, 7 p.m.



Meeting of the Charlotte Democrats

Tuesday, April 29, 6:30 p.m.

Planning Commission Meeting

Thursday, May 1, 7 p.m.

Trails Committee Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, May 6, 6:30 p.m.

Charlotte Energy Committee Meeting

Tuesday, May 13, 7 p.m.



Hawk's-eye view

Photo by Colbie Curler

A red-tailed hawk is watching over a meadow at Phoot-O-Philo Farm on Spear Street Extension on Sunday morning.

CALENDAR

Continued from page 20

to those who can recite their poems from memory. For more information visit charlottegrange.org/events.

Shelburne Museum opening day Saturday, May 10, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Celebrate the start of the 2025 season with a day dedicated to welcoming the community with free admission, musical performances, gallery talks, nature walks, drop-in art making and more. Plus new exhibitions including "Sound, Art, & Ink: Higher Ground Gig Posters," "Herd: Karen Petersen's Bronze Horses," "Dahlov Ipcar: The Possibilities of Pattern," "Blueprint of a Collection: Cyanotype Photography by David Sokosh" and "Porcelain Love Letters: The Art of Mara Superior."

Timber framing talk Sunday, May 11, 2-3:30 p.m.

The Ferrisburgh Historical Society's May speaker at the Ferrisburgh Town Hall, is Will Gusakov, a Vermonter who is a timber framer working out of Lincoln, building and repairing timber frame homes and barns. After a devastating fire in the Notre Dame cathedral in Paris, he was called to work on helping restore one of the most iconic buildings on the planet. He and his wife, along with their two young children, moved to France and helped recreate part of the roof structure of the cathedral in Normandy, which was eventually shipped to Paris for installation. Gusakov will discuss his experience using techniques dating to medieval times.

Age Well luncheon Tuesday, May 13, 11:30 a.m.

St. Catherine of Siena and Age Well are offering a luncheon on May 13 for anyone 60 or older in the church's parish

hall at 72 Church Street in Shelburne. The check-in time is 11:30 a.m., and the meal will be served at noon. There is a \$5 suggested donation. The menu is scalloped potatoes with ham and cheddar, carrots, bread, strawberry and blueberry crisp with cream. The deadline to register is May 6 at 802-662-5283 or mbongiorno@agewellvt.org.

Charlotte Walks Friday, May 16, 8:30-9:30 a.m.

The Grange's Charlotte Walks is the third Friday of the month. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at a different Charlotte trailhead for a morning walk. Walks usually last about an hour and are led at a comfortable adult walking pace. Each month's location will be posted on the Grange events calendar: charlottegrange.org/events. Questions? Email kknh.nh@gmail.com.

Capital City Concert Saturday & Sunday, May 17 & 18, 7:30 & 3 p.m.

Capital City Concerts concludes its 25th anniversary season with two different concerts on Saturday, May 17, at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, May 18, at 3 p.m. at the Unitarian Church of Montpelier. The concerts will feature performances of George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue," as well as large chamber works of JS Bach, Mozart, Liszt and Brahms. The music will be performed by 16 of Capital City Concerts' most beloved performers, including the Borromeo String Quartet. Tickets and info at capitalcityconcerts.org.

Homeschool Days Monday & Tuesday, May 19 & 27

Shelburne Museum is offering two Homeschool Days on Monday, May 19, and Tuesday, May 27. The experience is intended to provide students in grades K-8 with both guided workshops and self-guided activities across the museum

grounds. Students will rotate through a selection of interactive, hands-on workshops throughout the day to enhance students' understanding of social studies, art and science. To register and with questions, please contact school and youth programs educator Sara Wolfson at education@shelburnemuseum.org or 802-985-0922

Worn flag collection Saturday-Saturday, May 24-31

Weather and the sun inevitably result in a worn-out flag. If your flag is tattered or soiled and it's time for a new one, the Charlotte Grange can help you make sure your old flag is taken care of properly. On Memorial Day, the Grange will be collecting worn flags from our Charlotte cemeteries and taking them to the Vergennes American Legion to be "retired" in a Flag Day ceremony there. If you have a flag to dispose of, please bring it to the Charlotte Memorial Day event on Monday, May 26, at 9 a.m. at the Grandview Cemetery, 403 Church Hill Road, or drop off your flag at the Grange May 24-31 in the covered bin in front. To learn more email sallyw@aol.com or visit charlottegrange.org/events.

'La Traviata' Saturday, May 24, 7 p.m.

Opera Vermont is performing Giuseppe Verdi's "La Traviata," one of the most beloved operas, at the Barre Opera House. The production will showcase the talents of internationally renowned Italian soprano Scilla Cristiano, making her American debut in the iconic role of Violetta Valéry. The opera features some of Verdi's most instantly recognizable and emotionally stirring music, including the famous drinking song, the "Brindisi" (Libiamo ne' lieti calici), a joyful toast that sets the stage for the passion and tragedy to come. Tickets at <https://tinyurl.com/yj2n9b4d>.

Memorial Day gathering Monday, May 26, 9-10 a.m.

On Memorial Day morning gather at Grandview Cemetery, 403 Church Hill Road., Charlotte. After a short ceremony, interested folks will help place flags on the graves of those who served or died in military service. All are welcome to join the ceremony, to place flags or both. To volunteer email kknh.nh@gmail.com or visit charlottegrange.org/events.



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Library News

Before April is over, there are still Earth Month events

Margaret Woodruff
Director

There are still more April experiences to celebrate the Earth. Coming up this week:

- Friday, April 18, 8:30 a.m., Charlotte Walks, Williams Woods
- Saturday, April 19, 1 p.m., Beaver Talk & Walk, Charlotte Library
- Monday-Friday, April 21-25, Pollinator Pathway Garden Work
- Monday, April 21, 5:30 p.m., Dark Sky Vermont, Charlotte Library
- Tuesday, April 22, 7 p.m., “Wrenched” film, Charlotte Library

Programs for kids

Monthly baby & toddler time Saturday, May 3, 10 a.m.

Baby Time: Join other young families in an unstructured hour of play and exploration in the young children’s area. Ages birth to 12 months.

Toddlers: Join other young families in an unstructured hour of play and exploration in the program room. Ages 12 months to 24 months.

Preschool story time Tuesdays, 10 a.m.

Come to the Charlotte Library for preschool stories, crafts and activities. No registration required. Age 2 and over.

Preschool free play Wednesdays, 10 a.m.

Play in the preschool years enables children to explore and make sense of the world around them, as well as to use and develop their imagination. Explore the sensory table, sorting, playing with blocks, playdoh — these are a few of the open-ended projects planned for Wednesday morning play-based learning at the Charlotte Library.

Babytime Thursdays, 9:30 a.m.

You’re invited to an unstructured hour for parents, caregivers and babies to play, explore books and chat in the young children’s area. Ages birth to 18 months.

Let’s Lego Saturdays, 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Drop-in for Lego free play. We’ll have loads of Lego bricks out, along with some books and prompts for inspiration. For all ages. Please note: Children under 10 must be accompanied by an adult.

Programs for adults

Stillwater meditation Saturdays, 9 a.m. (no meeting April 26)

Poetry and meditation are offered freely and in person to the Charlotte community. Come for quiet reflection, contemplation and gentle meditation instruction. Respect for all beings and faiths is a foundational quality of our time together. Beginning and experienced meditators are welcome.

‘Kamogawa Food Detectives’ Thursday, April 17, 7:30 p.m.

The Thursday Book Club is reading

“Kamogawa Food Detectives,” which raises the question: What’s the one dish you’d do anything to taste just one more time? Down a quiet backstreet in Kyoto exists a special restaurant. Run by Koishi Kamogawa and her father Nagare, the Kamogawa Diner serves up deliciously extravagant meals. But that’s not the main reason customers stop by. The father-daughter duo are food detectives. Through ingenious investigations, they are able to recreate dishes from a person’s treasured memories, dishes that may well hold the keys to their forgotten past and future happiness. Copies available at the circulation desk. Join the discussion on Zoom at <https://tinyurl.com/yxw56ca>.

Beaver talk & walk Saturday, April 19, 1 p.m.

Meet at the library for another of the Earth Month events, a beaver talk and walk to learn from Bob Hyams how beavers are key to conservation of Lake Champlain. After the talk the group will head out to see beavers in action at Thorp Brook.

Mystery Book Group: Monday, April 21, 10 a.m.

In “We Solve Mysteries,” Steve Wheeler is enjoying retired life. He still does the odd bit of investigation work, but he prefers his familiar routines: the pub quiz, his favorite bench, his cat waiting for him at home. His days of adventure are over, but his daughter-in-law Amy Wheeler thinks adrenaline is good for the soul. Working in private security and solving murders every day is dangerous. It’s a family business. Copies available at the circulation desk.

DarkSky Vermont Monday, April 21, 5:30 p.m.

Join Gregory Caicco from DarkSky Vermont presents Nurturing the Night: How the Dark Skies of Vermont Shelter Healing and the Imagination to celebrate International Dark Sky Week, April 21-28, and enter the history, medicine and poetics of the night as essential for environmental and human wellbeing. Honor Vermont’s significant efforts looking after the star-soaked nights of its ancestors and discuss ways to keep our nights dark and our hearts open.

‘Wrenched’ Tuesday, April 22, 7 p.m.

The film “Wrenched” captures the passing of the monkey wrench from the pioneers of eco-activism to the new generation which will carry Edward Abbey’s legacy into the 21st century. The fight continues to sustain the last bastion of the American wilderness — the spirit of the West.

Sunday afternoon music jam Sunday, April 27, 1-3 p.m.

A “jam” is sharing a tune or song of your choice as we go around the circle. Participants may join in but no pressure to perform. Sit in or sit out. Share or pass. Any age or ability in a supportive, non-judgmental environment. Guitar, ukulele, mandolin, banjo, fiddle, bass, keyboard, harmonicas, hand drums — anything goes. For questions or comments, please contact

Sallie Mack: 802.425.6212 or salliemack@gmavt.net.

The Grace of Imperfection Tuesday, April 29, 7-8:30 p.m.

Join Jonathan Silverman for The Grace of Imperfection: A Ceramicist’s Lens on Japanese History and His Own Japanese-inspired Art Work as part of the library’s series honoring local artists. Silverman will first take his audience on a visual journey through Japanese history linking the rich tradition in Japan ceramic, culture, and art. He then will share the influence of Japanese aesthetics on his creative process with examples in the library of his recent work. He will also give an update on the activities connected to the Japan Foundation grant supporting the global partnership between Nishiawakura, a small village in Japan, and the Shelburne Craft School and Shelburne Farms.

Recurring programs

Book chat Wednesdays, 3 p.m.

Meet each week (except April 16) to discuss new books, old books and books we might have missed. Each week, library director Margaret Woodruff selects a theme

and highlights related titles from the library collection. No registration necessary.

Crochet & knit night Wednesdays, 5-6:30 p.m.

Join in a casual weekly session of crocheting and chatting, knitting and catching up. Bring your project or start a new one with yarn and needles available at the library, along with plenty of books to instruct and inspire. For teens and adults.

Library contact information:

Margaret Woodruff, director
Cheryl Sloan, youth services librarian
Susanna Kahn, tech librarian
Phone: 802-425-3864
Email: info@charlottepubliclibrary.org
For the latest information about programs, books and activity kits, sign up for the newsletter at <https://tinyurl.com/n5usd25r>.
The Charlotte Library Board of Trustees meets the first Thursday of each month at 6 p.m., unless rescheduled following the Opening Meeting Law. The next scheduled board meeting is this Thursday, May 1, at 6 p.m. Contact the library or visit the library website (charlottepubliclibrary.org) for more information.

Celebrating Easter ... Island



Photo courtesy of Hank Kaestner

Hank Kaestner shared his experiences from a trip to Easter Island and Chile’s lake district at the library on Thursday, April 10, to a packed room. Besides adding to his lifetime birding list which is now at 8,245 birds, he visited the Easter Island “heads,” or moai, large, monolithic statues carved by Polynesians from volcanic rock on Rapa Nui (Easter Island). Kaestner said the peregrinations of the Polynesians is his favorite story about the human race. Around 2000 B.C., they traveled from a Lanyu Island, a small island about 20 miles long off the southern tip of Taiwan, in dugout canoes to places as far flung as New Zealand, New Caledonia, Madagascar and Hawaii. They made it to Easter Island, which is only about 15 miles long, a trip of more than 2,500 miles. Because of the camera lens used, he is not nearly as close as the photo implies.

Senior Center News

Memory, lifetime planning programs featured this month

Lori York
Director

Don't forget the memory café this Saturday, April 19, the lifetime planning expo with information on financial and senior care planning Tuesday, April 29, or the variety of other programs the Charlotte Senior Center is offering this spring.

As always, the senior center is holding programs focusing on health, art and building community.

Programs

It's Easter & it's chilly Thursday, April 17, 1 p.m.

Join Hank Kaestner for a captivating presentation on his journey to Easter Island and the stunning Lake District of Chile. He's got great photos and naturally many of them are of birds he saw as he added to his birding life list. Don't miss this exploration of two incredible destinations. Free. To register, call 802-425-6345.

Memory cafe Saturday, April 19, 11 a.m.-noon

Join us for the first Memory Cafe at the Charlotte Senior Center. This free event offers a supportive and social environment for individuals living with memory loss, along with their caregivers or loved ones. Engage in a fun activity, connect with others and find support. Memory cafes will be held monthly at the senior center on the third Saturday. Free. To register, call 802-425-6345 or contact Susan Cartwright at cartwright.susan1@gmail.com for more information.

Shape-note singing Sunday, April 27, 12:30-2:30 p.m.

Traditional a capella, four-part harmony sung for the joy of singing, not as a practice for performance. Search "sacred harp" on YouTube for examples, then come and sing. Introduction to shape notes and scales is recommended and offered 30 minutes before each fourth Sunday singing. The first hour will be sacred harp singing and the second hour will be singing from an alternate shape-note book. Books will be provided. Free. For questions or to schedule your introduction to shape-notes and scales, please contact Kerry Cullinan at kclynxvt@gmail.com.

VT Lifetime Planning Expo Tuesday, April 29, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Come to the VT Lifetime Planning Expo: From Financial Foundations to Senior Care Solutions for an informative event covering everything from navigating your financial future to estate planning, health care, real estate, philanthropy and senior care solutions. Learn from experts in the field and connect with others who are on a similar journey. Don't miss out on this opportunity to gain valuable insights and plan for a secure future. Free. To register, call 802-425-6345.

Brain games Fridays, 2-4 p.m.

There are many ways adults can stimulate their brains to increase mental health, improve memory skills and contribute to overall well-being. Research finds that positive interaction with others and engagement in stimulating group activities sharpens cognition and increases memory

ability. Join us as we play various games, share laughter and enjoy one another's company. We have some games available but also feel free to bring your own games. Free.

Alzheimer's caregivers support group Wednesday, May 7, 3-4 p.m.

Are you caring for someone with Alzheimer's? Do you know someone who is? Please join us for our monthly Caregivers Support Group on the second Wednesday of each month from 3-4 p.m. The meetings provide a safe place for caregivers, family and friends of persons with dementia to meet and develop a mutual support system. Please note the earlier time during the winter months. Free. No registration required. For more information email louisefairbank67@gmail.com.

Art

Creative expressions by local educators

The work of local art teachers is on display throughout April. This informal group was formed to encourage one another in pursuing creative passions and producing original artwork.

Arts & crafts group Wednesdays, 10 a.m.-noon

Come create, experiment, share ideas, encourage others and have fun with the creative arts & crafts group on Wednesday mornings. Bring whatever creative endeavor you're working on, enjoy doing, or thinking about trying out—painting, drawing, writing, scrapbooking, coloring, origami, cardmaking, knitting—the opportunities are limitless. Free. No registration required. For questions, email Katie Franko at kfranko@gmavt.net.

Fiber arts group Thursdays, 9:15 a.m.-noon

The fiber arts group is a warm and welcoming space to share your passion for handwork. Bring your rug hooking, knitting or any other fiber project and enjoy working alongside others in a friendly, creative environment. By donation. No registration required. Questions: dianburgess@hotmail.com.

Photo discussion group Sunday, April 6, 2-4 p.m.

Join the monthly photo discussion group, where photographers of all skill levels are welcome to share their work, ideas and experiences. Bring a photo and a story to share with the group. This is a great chance to engage in creative dialogue, get feedback and explore the impact of your images in a supportive and collaborative environment. By donation. No registration required. For questions or more information, contact Emily Cross at ecross@ecrossphoto.com.

Exercise

Bone Builders Mondays, 9:45-10:45 a.m., Tuesdays, 10:30-11:30 a.m., & Wednesdays, 1:30-2:30 p.m. & Fridays, 11 a.m.-noon

RSVP Bone Builders, a program of United Way of Northwest Vermont, is a no-impact, weight-training program designed to prevent and even reverse the negative effects of osteoporosis in older adults. Bone Builders consists of a warm-up, balance exercises, arm and leg exercises, and a cool down with



Photo by Lori York

Professor Nicole Librandi offers guidance to student Mary Richards during a beginner Italian class at the senior center.

stretching. Free. No registration required, but there is paperwork to complete for the RSVP Bone Builders program.

Chair yoga Tuesdays, April 8-22, 1:30-2:30 p.m.

Join Lynn Alpeter, former co-owner of Yoga Roots and yoga teacher, for a gentle and accessible chair yoga class designed to help you connect with your breath, move your body and lift your mood. Whether you're new to yoga or looking for a more supportive practice, this class is perfect for anyone seeking to increase flexibility, balance and relaxation. Using a chair for support, we'll explore mindful movement and simple stretches that can be easily adapted for all levels. Leave feeling uplifted, energized and centered. All are welcome! \$30 for the three-week series. Registration and payment required by April 4. To register, call 802-425-6345.

Tai chi Thursdays, 9:45-10:45 a.m.

The Yang international short form is the most popular form of tai chi practice. It consists of slow continuous soft circular movements which are coordinated with breathing. Regular practice helps to improve balance, mind/body connection, mental awareness, flexibility, stability, coordination and overall health. When practiced in the company of others, it is both uplifting and energizing. Taught by a certified instructor who has studied with the founder of the Tai Chi for Arthritis Association. Email questions to belizahammer@hotmail.com. \$10 a class. No registration required.

Yoga dance Fridays, 12:30-1:30 p.m.

Let Your Yoga Dance incorporate basic dance-like movements to music, guided by the body's energy system (chakras). It is a safe, compassionate, gentle movement practice, allowing for individual expression and nonjudgmental acceptance. This class

is appropriate for all levels of fitness and abilities. Cost: \$10 a class. No registration required.

Gentle walking/hiking group Thursday, April 24, 9 a.m.

Enjoy the beauty of Nature. Come walk at a gentle pace with other seniors. The group will meet each month for a congenial non-strenuous walk. Location to be determined based on conditions of the local trails. Meet at 9 a.m. in the foyer of the Charlotte Senior Center. Questions? Contact Penny Burman at 916-753-7279. Free. Registration required.

Meals

Menus are posted on the website: charlotteseniorcentervt.org.

Monday lunches

Served weekly. Lunch is served 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., or until the food runs out. Suggested lunch donation \$5. No registration required.

Senior center info:

The senior center offers programs for adults 50 and older from Charlotte and surrounding communities. Priority is given to seniors, but programs are open to adults of all ages. Interested in receiving a weekly reminder about what is happening? Sign up for the email newsletters at charlotteseniorcentervt.org. The "Week Ahead" email is sent out on Friday mornings with activities, lunch menus and special programs for the upcoming week.

Lori York, director,
lyork@charlotteseniorcentervt.org
212 Ferry Road, Charlotte
802-425-6345, charlotteseniorcentervt.org

Write Ingredients

Carrots in war, literature, hot dog buns and Monday Munch

Susan Ohanian
Contributor

*Yes, let April showers
Bring May flowers.
But we'd sure like to forego
April snow.*

April's Monday Munches bring us vegetables with intriguing histories. According to "The Diner's Dictionary: Word Origins of Food & Drink," the modern orange carrot seems to have originated in a purple-rooted variety grown first in Afghanistan and gradually conveyed westward by the Arabs.

On the opening page of "All Quiet on the Western Front," Erich Maria Remarque wrote of "bodies full of beef ... a double ration of sausage and bread. ... The cook with his carrot head is begging us to eat."

I'd just note that as a fourth grader, I was proud of my red hair, but when a kid called me "carrot head," I gave him a bloody nose.

British authorities noted that pilots of night-fighter aircraft consumed vast amounts of carrots to enhance their ability to see in the dark. "Grandma's Wartime Kitchen: World War II and the Way We Cooked" notes that because canned pumpkin was popular in wartime military commissaries, it was rationed for public consumption. So, on the homefront, carrot pie became popular.

Morkovcha, Korean carrot salad, has a dramatic history. In the 1860s, faced with drought and famine, thousands of Koreans crossed the border into Russia. In 1937, Stalin violently relocated nearly 200,000 Koryo-saram, or ethnic Koreans, living in the former Soviet Union, to remote parts of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. When common ingredients such as napa cabbage weren't available for kimchi, carrots were a handy substitute. "Gastro Obscura: A Food Adventurer's Guide" notes that this "crunchy, garlicky, sweet-and-sour salad is so well loved that many Uzbek grocery stores sell packaged spice mixes for customers to use at home."



Photo by Mali Maeder from Pixabay

A recipe for producing carrot hot dogs at home includes marinating the vegetables in a mixture of vegetable broth, apple cider vinegar, rice vinegar, soy sauce, liquid smoke, paprika, mustard powder, garlic powder, coriander, black pepper and olive oil.

Philadelphia Magazine (<https://tinyurl.com/ycke74y3>) offered an opinion: "A carrot hot dog is a carrot cured to taste like a hot dog, then grilled and placed in a roll. ... What could possibly be good about a cooked carrot enveloped in bread and topped with mustard and ketchup? Nothing. The answer is nothing."

Asparagus is not totally free of brouhaha. The word is from the Greek "asparagos," perhaps linked to the Greek "spargan," to swell. So, to say someone has an asparagus head is not complimentary. We may refer to someone who is tall and lanky as a "beanpole." The French say, "Etre une asperge."

The Spanish say, "¡Vete a freír espárragos!" We say, "Go fly a kite!"

With 9,500 acres devoted to the green stalk, Michigan is the number one asparagus producer in our nation. In ideal conditions a stalk can grow half an inch per hour, and about 500 million spears are hand-harvested each year.

In his "Garden Book," Thomas Jefferson noted that asparagus appeared on his table 22 times, with the average date being April 8. Although he enjoyed it on buttered toast, according to "Dining at Monticello," Mary Randolph's directions for asparagus preparation were more elaborate than for any other vegetable.

As "The Great Food Almanac: A Feast of Facts from A to Z" puts it: "Anything that tastes this good, can't possibly be bad for you."

"Vermont Fresh: A Fruit and Vegetable Handbook" advises that besides being known for their abundant beta-carotene, carrots are full of potassium, dietary fiber and vitamin C. Asparagus is one of the best sources of folic acid, which lowers the risk of heart and liver disease.

Meanwhile, in fruit news, the Supreme Court recently declined to hear California artist Joe Morford's appeal to give him credit for being the first person to tape a banana to a wall in the name of art. Nearly two decades ago, he duct taped a banana and orange to a wall, titling it "Banana and Orange." When, Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan, sold his banana-on-wall artwork, "Comedian," for \$6.2 million, Morford insisted it was his idea.

In case you think this can't get more bizarre, in November 2024, cryptocurrency entrepreneur Justin Sun bought No. 2 of Cattelan's limited edition of three bananas on wall pieces for \$6.2 million. Soon afterward, he ate the banana onstage, comparing it to a crypto asset and said, "The real value is the concept itself."

The Latin admonition for those who come late to a meal is "sero venientibus ossa," or bones for those who come late. The Charlotte Senior Center promises: "First come, first served." But come early or come late, although volunteer cooks don't promise bananas, they do promise good food and good company at the senior center, 212 Ferry Road.

Monday Munch April 21

11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Scalloped potatoes with ham, glazed roasted carrots, bread and gingerbread.

April 28 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Asparagus quiche, green salad, bread and dessert.

Reminder: It's never too late for children of all ages to find a great read at the Little Free Library at the Grange, 2858 Spear Street.

The 446-page "Tuberculosis: The Greatest Story Never Told" by Frank Ryan is not there, but it's a book Robert F. Kennedy Jr. needs to read. Or we can suggest the shorter version: "Everything is Tuberculosis" by John Green (208 pages).

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